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Allegiances

RainClan

Leader:

Froststar (light blue colored she-cat with blue eyes)

Mentor to Rainpaw

Deputy:

Firefeather (Flame colored she-cat with blue eyes)

Medicine cat:

Ashtail (grey tabby tom with blue eyes)

Cloudheart (white she-cat with blue eyes)

Warriors:

Leafshade (mottled brown tom with green eyes)

Flowerpetal (white and grey spotted she-cat with green eyes)

Mentor to Featherpaw

Shadeclaw (grey tom with brown at the tail tip)

Stonefur (grey tom with blue eyes)

Mentor to Mousepaw

Stormwing (brown with darker flecks)

Fernshadow (grey with white specked she-cat)

Dewpelt (spotted pelt with brown, green and white

tom)

Goldenfeather (golden she-cat with darker flecks)

Nightfall (black she-cat with blue eyes)

Dapplefur (dappled tortoiseshell with green eyes)

Mentor of Honeypaw

Petalfall (grey she-cat with green eyes with brown around her ears)

Moonshadow (black tom with silver spots and blue eyes)

Pebbleclaw (tabby brown tom with black around muzzle)

Sparrowtail (brown tom with black spots on the tail)

Dawnheart (ginger she-cat with brilliant green eyes)

Streamfur (blue grey tom with green eyes)

Lightnose (silver she-cat with lighter stripes)

Apprentices:

Mousepaw (grey tom with brown ears tips)

Honeypaw (golden furred she-cat with darker stripes)

Rainpaw (blue colored she-cat with brilliant green eyes)

Featherpaw (silver gray she-cat with green eyes)

Queens:

Splashnose (grey she-cat with white spots)

(Willowkit, Bramblekit and Amberkit)

Elders:

Snowflake (old white she-cat with blue eyes and with a spot of grey

on the tail tip)

Hawkflight (mottled brown tom with green eyes)

Grassfur (once a beautiful tabby she-cat but was injured in battle and was forced to become elder)

Meadowtail (pale tabby tom with brown stripes)

Whiskerfur (mottled brown tom, once a great hunter until he had greencough and decided to move into the elders den)

Chapter 1

"Can you please open your eyes? I'm bored, Rainkit!" Featherkit's voice woke Rainkit. Featherkit was her littermate, she had opened her eyes already, while Rainkit didn't yet. *I don't want to! Just leave me alone!* Rainkit fidgeted in her shared nest with her mother, Lightnose.

"Be patient Featherkit, she'll open her eyes soon. But if she doesn't want to, don't." Lightnose meowed softly to Featherkit. *I'll just open my eyes now, I guess, I wonder what Featherkit looks like!*

"Featherkit! You're so pretty!" Rainkit exclaimed, admiring her littermates pelt as she examined Featherkit. Her eyes were green, like emeralds and her pelt was a shiny silver color. *I hope I'm as pretty as that!*

"Hey! You opened your eyes!" Featherkit looked at Rainkit.

"I guess," Rainkit agreed hesitantly.

"Your eyes are green too! Like mine!" Featherkit exclaimed, looking at Rainkit.

"They are? Cool!" Rainkit turned to stare at her sister's eye again. *Is mine really like that?* Rainkit's pelt was pale blue, groomed well by Lightnose, her eyes were identical to Featherkit's.

"Can we go play now?" Featherkit begged, her wide green eyes looking at Lightnose.

"Of course! And Rainkit, I see you've

opened your eyes!" Lightnose agreed, and turned to look at Rainkit, giving her an affectionate lick. The added, more serious now, "just don't be rude!"

"Of course not!" Rainkit meowed indignant showing in her gaze. *Does she think we're mouse brains?*

"Okay, of you go then!" Lightnose nudged them to their paws, and they scurried out of the den, disappearing through the fern tunnel.

As soon as they entered the clearing, Rainkit gasped, "Wow! The camp is massive!" There were lots of different bushes and tunnels, and Rainkit was amazed at how big it was. *It's so big! I can't wait to see where everything is!*

"Hey there!" A huge tabby tom walked towards them, "who are you?"

"I'm Featherkit, and that's Rainkit!" Featherkit announced proudly to the tom, flicking her tail to Rainkit. "Who are you? How are you so big?" Featherkit gazed at him with huge eyes.

"I'm Mousepaw, and I'm an apprentice! Of course I'm bigger than you two!" Mousepaw let out a purr of amusement.

"Can you show us around then? We've only just opened our eyes!" Rainkit asked politely.

"Sure!" Mousepaw answered, "follow me!" *He's so nice! He could be our friend!* Rainkit followed, glancing at Mousepaw kindly.

He veered around the corner of the clearing and waving at a weaved bramble den. "This is the apprentices den! Where me and the other apprentices sleep."

The apprentices den was huge, weaved into a bramble thicket with brambles and ferns. It had a passageway, leading into the apprentices den.

"Come on!" Mousepaw walked ahead, leaving Featherkit and Rainkit behind.

"Hey! Wait for us!" Rainkit hurried forward, panting as she caught up, while Featherkit did the same. *We're not apprentices you know!* Rainkit shot a glare at Mousepaw.

"Oops, sorry!" Mousepaw slackened his pace so that they could follow more easily.

He then led the way to another den, "Here is the warriors den, I know, it's massive. Imagine being that big!" He meowed, showing them the den. It was almost identical to the apprentices den, except for its size and shape.

Rainkit looked at the den up and down, about to go in and check out what it was like, and Featherkit was about to follow, when Mousepaw forestalled them, "hey! You're not allowed to go in! It's for the warriors, unless a warrior takes you in."

"Fine," Featherkit shrugged, padding away from the den, while Rainkit gave the den another rueful look. *I wish I was a warrior already!* Then followed Featherkit.

"You've seen the apprentices den, and the warriors den, so now I'll show you the medicine cat den!" Mousepaw padded away, as Rainkit and Featherkit scampered beside him.

He stopped at a huge cave entrance, unlike all the other dens, this one wasn't weaved, it was just a cave, simple as that. But the den had a part where there is a weaved den in it too.

"Here is the medicine cat den! One of the most important dens." Mousepaw told them. *Cool!* Rainkit stared at it, it looked awesome!

"Hi there! I see you've brought kits here Mousepaw!" A cat padded out of the den, glancing at Mousepaw, then at Rainkit and Featherkit.

"Yeah Cloudheart, they're quite good." Mousepaw mrrowed, purring.

"What, quite good? We're awesome!" Featherkit retorted indignantly.

"Yeah! We're awesome!" Rainkit piped up behind her sister, adding.

"Well, kits, I'm Cloudheart, the medicine cat apprentice. My mentor, Ashtail, is the medicine cat." Cloudheart introduced herself to the kits with a purr.

"Come in if you like! I'm sure Ashtail won't mind!" Cloudheart

invited, waving her tail at them, *yes! We get to see the den!*

Then, Cloudheart paused, *is she changing her mind?* Rainkit glanced at her anxiously. Cloudheart continued, adding, "Mousepaw, you'd better rest, I'm quite sure Stonefur will have something planned for you."

"Of course," Mousepaw dipped his head, and padded away into the clearing. Rainkit let out a sigh of relief, *she hasn't changed her mind.*

"Come on in!" Cloudheart called, trodding into the den already.

"Yes please!" Featherkit and Rainkit hurried inside, glancing around in awe. There was a tangy scent of herbs, but Rainkit ignored it. "What's that smell! It stinks!" Featherkit stuck out her tongue, she looked hilarious!

There was lots of holes for leaves Rainkit did not know, *herbs, probably, since it's the medicine cat den.* She guessed, but without getting a good look at the whole den, a voice came.

"Rainkit! Featherkit! Come here! Your father's here!" It was their mother calling to them from the fern tunnel.

"Okay! Coming!" Featherkit scampered to the fern tunnel eagerly, while Rainkit wasn't so eager. *I didn't even finish exploring the den yet!* She sighed.

"Thanks Cloudheart! But I have to go now." Rainkit told Cloudheart sadly, with a rueful look on her face.

"Of you go then! Come back next time!" Cloudheart nudged her, almost tipping Rainkit over, making her sway on her paws.

"I will!" Rainkit promised, joining her littermate to the nursery.

Chapter 2

"Streamfur!" Featherkit ran towards their father, burying her muzzle into his, Rainkit stared at her, then followed, scampering into his father's warm fur.

"Hi Featherkit and Rainkit," Streamfur purred, his eyes were green, like Rainkit and Featherkit's.

"Did you bring us fresh-kill?" Rainkit asked inquisitively, glancing at Streamfur with wide green eyes. *What does fresh-kill taste like?* Rainkit wondered.

"No, little one, you're too small to eat fresh-kill!" Streamfur replied sternly, and added, "you'll choke on it."

"No we won't! We're going to play with it!" Featherkit protested, unsheathing her claws.

"No, prey died for us to eat, not to waste for nothing." Lightnose shook her head at Featherkit sternly. Featherkit looked disappointed, but said nothing.

"Of course!" Rainkit put in, glaring at Featherkit. *Of course we won't shred it!*

"Do you want to go out to the clearing? I'm sure Froststar will be in the clearing." Streamfur suggested, *the leader of the Clan!* Rainkit breathed, excitement crawled into her pelt, *I'll see the leader of the Clan!*

"Yes please!" Rainkit eyes shone, while Featherkit paced around the den.

"Come on then," Streamfur called, then added, whispering to Lightnose, "you might want to stay here."

"Yes," Lightnose nodded, then added, "you sure you can take care of

them by yourself?"

Streamfur's whiskers twitched, "I think I can, don't you?" Lightnose nodded. Rainkit glanced at them, giving them a sideways glance. *Why does Lightnose have to stay? And we don't need taking care of!*

"Can we just go now?" Featherkit scuffled the ground impatiently, pacing around, still.

"Okay, come on," Streamfur lead the way, zigzagging through the camp, passing through the apprentices den and the warriors den, *I know all those dens!* Rainkit felt proud, there was still some places to explore, but she knew the camp now!

"Hello Streamfur, are these your kits?" A light blue colored she-cat with blue eyes asked Streamfur warmly.

"Yes, Froststar, they are," Streamfur seemed to puff out his chest as he replied.

"What are your names, little ones?" Froststar nodded, and turned to look at Featherkit and Rainkit, *this is the leader of the Clan!* Rainkit stared at her leader, wide eyed.

"I'm Featherkit, and this is Rainkit!" Featherkit told Froststar, flicking her ear to Rainkit.

"Great names," Froststar nodded, eyes gleaming with satisfaction.

"Are you our Clan leader?" Featherkit stared at her in awe. Rainkit rolled her eyes, *Featherkit must be fish brained!*

"Of course she's our leader! She has a star in her name!" Rainkit snapped at her littermate, forestalling Froststar as she was about to speak.

Rainkit glanced at her, "oh, sorry Froststar." Rainkit mumbled, scuffling her paws on the ground and staring down into a small crack inside the ground, wishing she could disappear into it.

Why was I so clumsy? I might have ruined my only chance to become a warrior! Rainkit scolded herself, glancing up at Froststar, then asked

hesitantly, her voice quivering, "will I be able to become an apprentice anymore?"

"No way! You're never going to be an apprentice now! Forestalling your leader!" Froststar allowed herself to stop herself from purring and told Rainkit sternly, joking.

Rainkit was horrified, she glanced at Streamfur, who was standing beside them the whole time, tried to hide his giggle. *Why is he trying to laugh? I'm never going to be a warrior now!* Rainkit stared at Froststar miserably.

"I'm just kidding Rainkit, of course you can be a warrior! You're going to be great!" Froststar purred at Rainkit's miserable gaze, touching her nose to Rainkit's.

"Really?" Rainkit stared at her, not quite sure that was true.

"Of course!" Froststar replied, her gaze full of laughter. *I'll still be a warrior!* Rainkit puffed out her chest fur, licking it thoroughly.

"Do you want to see the Highrock?" Froststar asked, glancing around the camp, as if searching for it.

"Okay!" Featherkit and Rainkit squeaked. *I'm going to be the best warrior ever! I'm going to see the Highrock!*

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"Here it is! The Highrock." Froststar explained, flicking her tail towards a huge rock, the size even bigger than Froststar!

"Wow," Featherkit stared at it, while Rainkit thought, *it must be so important! Leaders stand on it!*

"It's huge!" Rainkit added, looking at it in awe.

***

"Ow!" A spasm shook Splashnose, she had just moved into the nursery a moon ago, and was now kitting. Rainkit and Featherkit sat outside, ears pricked.

"Ashtail! Help me! It hurts!" Splashnose wailed, calling to the medicine cat feebly.

Stormwing, her mate, paced around the clearing, as if itching to say something but wouldn't. *What's going on in him?* Rainkit wondered.

Then finally he spoke, nervous. "Will she be okay?" He asked Lightnose.

"She *will* be okay, Cloudheart and Ashtail is with her." Lightnose replied, her mother's mew was taut, as if she didn't believe herself either. *She'll be okay.* Rainkit repeated her mother's words silently.

"Hold on Splashnose! I'll get you a stick to bite on!" Stormwing called, rushing out of the den immediately.

"Thanks," Splashnose sounded relieved as Stormwing gave her a stick. All Rainkit could hear was panting noises now.

"The second one's out! A she-kit! One more! I think." A triumphant meow came from inside, *Ashtail,* Rainkit guessed. She peered into a crack in the nursery, pain flashed in Splashnose's eyes.

"And! The third one, a tom!" This time it was Cloudheart, she licked the third kit, a brown tabby with darker stripes.

"Can we go in now?" Featherkit complained, they had sat out in the clearing all day, waiting patiently.

"Yeah! I want to see the kits!" Rainkit added, without waiting for an reply, they bounded into the den.

"Let's name this Willowkit," Splashnose meowed to Stormwing, pointing at the gray she kit with white stripes. Not noticing Rainkit and Featherkit.

"Yes," Stormwing breathed, touching the kit's little nose with an affectionate lick.

"Maybe Amberkit for this one?" Stormwing flicked his tail at the light brown she kit with amber eyes.

"Okay," Splashnose agreed. And added, "Bramblekit for this one then." Fixing her gaze at their last kit, the brown tom with darker stripes.

"Okay." Stormwing's eyes shone proudly, looking at his kits, "Willowkit, Amberkit and Bramblekit."

Great names. Rainkit thought, she felt like they would be good friends.

Chapter 3

"Grrr! I'm a badger! You can't catch me! I'm going to eat you!" Bramblekit growled, trying to sound menacing.

He was half a moon old, and had only opened his eyes yesterday. Rainkit was two moons older than the litter. *It's so fun playing with them!* Rainkit suppressed a purr of amusement while Willowkit purred too.

"You look so silly!" WIllowkit laughed at her brother, his fur was matted with leaves because of their earlier play fighting.

"Let's practice the hunting crouch!" Rainkit suggested.

"Bet I'm better than you all!" Featherkit boasted to them.

"No way!" Amberkit protested, while Rainkit gave her sister a glare.

"Come on! Let's go," Rainkit padded to a part in the nursery with lots of moss.

"Not here!" WIllowkit complained, "let's do it in the clearing!"

"Yeah!" Bramblekit agreed. *I guess that'd be fine.*

"Okay then," Rainkit conceded, leading the way to the clearing near the apprentices den and stopped beside a patch of leaves, "here."

***

"Look at my hunting crouch!" Bramblekit squealed, *your tail looks like a stick!* Rainkit purred, swallowing back the words.

"Bramblekit, you look like a stick sticking out of nowhere!" Amberkit laughed, while Willowkit and Featherkit laughter so hard they rolled on the ground.

"It's not easy! You try it then Amberkit!" Bramblekit protested,

challenging Amberkit.

"No way!" Amberkit's eyes rounded.

"Scaredy-mouse!" Willowkit teased.

"Am not! I'm not going to be a warrior, that's all!" Amberkit replied.

"What? Why? What are you going to be then?" Featherkit asked as Rainkit looked puzzled. *Does Amberkit want to be a medicine cat? Living with the herbs? Gross!* She wrinkled her nose at the thought.

"I'm going to be a medicine cat." Amberkit replied simply. *She really does!* Rainkit swallowed hard.

"What? The herbs are disgusting! Why?" Bramblekit screwed up his face and stared at Amberkit.

"I just want to, it's interesting." Amberkit looked back, unblinking.

***

"Hey! Come share fresh-kill with me Willowkit!" Rainkit called to her. She was old enough to eat fresh-kill now. And Rainkit and Featherkit were already almost 6 moons old! And she would be apprenticed tomorrow!

"Coming!" Willowkit squealed, racing to Rainkit's side. Willowkit was her best friend now, and Bramblekit too.

"Should we share this vole together?" Willowkit stared at the vole, it was right beside the fresh-kill pile, not too high.

"Sure, I'll go get it." Rainkit agreed, padding towards the fresh-kill pile.

Picking up the vole, she padded back to a spot beside the nursery, where Willowkit was sitting. It was very heavy.

"Here," Rainkit panted, tired from getting the vole there.

"Thanks," Willowkit blinked at her, then bit into the prey,

beckoning Rainkit to do the same.

A strong tang flowed into Rainkit's mouth, relishing the fishy scent of it, she chewed, it was soft, and the flesh was very sweet. She liked vole, and fish. She swallowed, biting down into it's flesh again.

"Mmm," Willowkit licked her lips as soon as they were done eating. Rainkit started to wash herself, grooming her chest fur, and washing her face. *I want to look the best for my ceremony later!*

***

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar's yowl pierced the clearing. The cats poured out of their dens, gathering beneath the huge rock, waiting patiently for their leader's announcement.

Me and Featherkit's apprentice ceremony! Rainkit swallowed hard, she had waited for so long, and the day had finally come! She glanced back at Willowkit.

Willowkit glanced back, giving her an encouraging nudge and whispered, "go on you stupid furball!" Lightnose was somewhere behind, her eyes gleaming with approval.

"Featherkit, Rainkit! Come forward!" Froststar called, glancing around the clearing, searching for them.

Nervous, Rainkit padded forward, glancing up at Froststar, and Featherkit then padded forward too, stopping beside her.

Froststar looked down at them, "It's greenleaf, and there will be more kits being delivered, and more warriors will be made, very soon, in fact." She fixed her gaze towards the nursery, as if pointing out Splashnose and Stormwing's kits.

Then continued, "and today, we will have two new apprentices made! Rainkit and Featherkit are six moons old and is ready to become an apprentice." She fixed her gaze back at Rainkit and her sister, Rainkit could feel her sister trembling with excitement, and felt the same. *Yes! My day has come!*

"Featherkit, from this moment on till you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Featherpaw. Your mentor will be Flowerpetal. Flowerpetal, you are an experienced warrior, and I hope you will pass on your great skills to Featherkit. Train her well." Frostar turned to look at Flowerpetal, she gave Frostar and surprised look, and padded forward and touched noses with Featherpaw.

Featherpaw looked pleased, puffing out her chest as she waited for Rainkit.

"Rainkit, from this moment on till you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Rainpaw. Your mentor will be...me." Frostar finished. *I'm going to be Frostar's apprentice? Wow!* Rainpaw was so shocked she could hardly move a muscle.

Featherpaw was looking jealous now, scuffling her paws on the ground and not meeting Rainpaw's gaze. *I must be so special that my leader is going to train me!*

Choruses of their names rang in the clearing, "Featherpaw! Rainpaw! Featherpaw! Rainpaw!" Streamfur and Lightnose sang their names proudly, affection showing clearly. Rainpaw relished this moment, this was one of the most important part in life! *How much I wish I was a warrior now!* Rainpaw closed her eyes, trying to imagine that day.

"Rainpaw!" Willowkit scurried behind her, she suddenly looked smaller, more fragile.

"Willowkit!" Rainpaw turned around, looking at her best friend. "I'm an apprentice!" Rainpaw boasted proudly.

"I'll catch up soon! You just wait!" Willowkit snorted.

"In two moons, you mean!" Rainpaw purred, scoffing at Willowkit.

"Well, it's still great!" Willowkit protested.

"I can't wait till we train together!" Rainpaw admitted, excitement and energy flowed through her again. *I'm going to see outside of the camp!*

Rainpaw said farewell to Willowkit as she padded into the apprentices den, and settled down.

"Good night Feather*paw*." Rainpaw closed her eyes, saying her sister's new name.

"Good night Rain*paw*." Featherpaw's eyes gleamed in the darkness. *I'm sleeping in the apprentices den!*

***

"Come on Rainpaw! I'm going to show you the territory now." A mew sounded in Rainpaw's ear, waking her up. "Featherpaw and Flowerpetal is already waiting outside!" The mew sharpened into a urgent one, making Rainpaw open her eyes.

"Froststar!" Rainpaw woke with a start, Featherpaw was outside already, her claws clawing impatiently on the ground, Flowerpetal was beside her, waiting patiently. "Come on, wake up earlier next time, you shouldn't need your *leader* to wake you up!" Froststar told Rainpaw sternly.

"Sorry," Rainpaw lowered her gaze, she couldn't meet Froststar's gaze.

"Just remember." Froststar's mew softened. *I can't wait to see the forest with Featherpaw!* Excitement tickled through Rainpaw again, forgetting about Froststar's stern scolding.

Chapter 4

"This is the Stream! Our most important land in our territory." Frostar nodded at the wide stretch of water that seemed to go on forever.

"Why is it so important?" Rainpaw tipped her head sideways, it didn't *look* sacred or anything, just a river full of fish.

"That's because StarClan gave us that land. Which means the land will *always* be ours!" Frostar replied with an triumphant mew.

"Wow," Rainpaw looked at the Stream again, it suddenly looked more shiny and important. She wanted to get back to camp and tell Willowkit what she learned today so much! *I can't believe our territory is so big!*

"Come on, let's go back," Frostar flicked her tail to motion Rainpaw to follow. She ran forward quickly, catching up just as they reached the camp. "Did you like the trip?" Frostar asked Rainpaw as they stopped.

"Yes! I loved our territory! It's so big!" The words spluttered out of Rainpaw before she could stop herself. *That was... embarrassing.* Rainpaw scuffled her claws at the ground.

"Can I go now? I want to tell everything to Willowkit!" Rainkit asked, looking at Frostar pleadingly.

"Okay, go on then, I see you two are good friends." Frostar's whiskers twitched, looking at Rainpaw.

"Yes! We are good friends!" Rainpaw meowed earnestly, then scurried away towards the nursery.

"Willowkit! Willowkit!" Rainpaw called, *I hope she's in there,* Rainpaw thought anxiously.

"Rainpaw!" A delighted squeal came from inside, a grey and white

shape ran out in front of Rainpaw. It was Willowkit, Willowkit asked Rainpaw urgently, "what did you see?"

"The Stream, The Bird Tree, Fourtrees and the Great Rock, and The Leafbare Tree, and the... Oh, there's just so much!" Rainpaw blurted out everything.

"Wow, I wish I was with you." Willowkit eyes were glazed as if she was daydreaming.

"I ought to go now, I'm kinda hungry, you wanna come?" Rainpaw's belly rumbled, while Willowkit's eyes lit up.

"Yes please! I'm so hungry my belly thinks my throat is clawed out!" Willowkit sounded relieved.

Then she added, "Splashnose didn't let us leave the nursery in the morning unless an older cat takes you! So grumpy, she's just scared we'll cause trouble." Willowkit flicked her tail dismissively, looking as if she'd just filled her belly with her anger.

"Let's go then!" Rainpaw called, racing towards the fresh-kill pile.

***

"Come, Rainpaw, today, we are going to learn how to fish." Frostar beckoned Rainpaw with her tail by The Stream. They could see WindClan scurrying about with their patrols. *I love this view so much.* Rainpaw gave a huge yawn, and grunted.

"Okay," Rainpaw dipped her paw in the water, *it's so, so cold today!* Rainpaw was shivering, but she got used to the water and started to wade in the water.

"No, Rainpaw!" Frostar called her back just as Rainpaw was about to plunge in.

"What? I know how to swim already!" Rainpaw protested.

"But you don't know how to fish. If you do that, all the fish will run away," Frostar gave Rainpaw a stern glare, making Rainpaw flinch.

"Sorry Froststar," Rainpaw shrank under Froststar's glare. *I hope I don't make Froststar angry too much.*

"Now, just listen." Froststar softened her mew, allowing Rainpaw to feel confident.

"Okay," Rainpaw glanced at The Stream, she wanted to go in again, feel the water pull her fur, let the water take her and float on the water.

She stood at the water's edge as Froststar demonstrated, "like this," Froststar plunged her paw into the water and didn't move her paw until a fish came by. She clawed at it, digging her claws in and scooping it up, and finally giving it a killing bite.

"Wow, that was... quick!" Rainpaw looked at the fish, it was a carp, looking amazed at the catch. *What a big fat carp! It could feed a nursing queen and their kits!*

"It was nothing, you try it now." Froststar looked a little embarrassed, licking her chest fur a few times before replying.

"Okay!" Rainpaw bounded forward, put her paws into the water, and waited for a fish to come. *What if they don't come?* Rainpaw looked at Froststar nervously, Froststar nodded at her. *She believes in me!* New confidence flowed through Rainpaw, *I'm going to be the best apprentice ever!*

"Caught it!" Rainpaw flung the cod out of the water, giving it a killing bite on its neck, and placed it in front of her mentor.

"Wow, great job, apprentices usually don't get it on first try!" Froststar praised Rainpaw, then moved on to teach Rainpaw the hunting crouch and how to hunt.

***

Wow, a fat thrush is on that tree! Rainpaw looked at the bird pecking on the wood of the tree. *I have to catch it!*

Froststar was padding ahead, and didn't notice that Rainpaw was left behind, they had hunted a lot of prey and was heading back to

camp.

Rainpaw gave a hard push, skimming through the grass like wind, she flattened her ears and made sure there weren't any leaves that would ruin her catch.

Suddenly, she jumped, leaping in the air, she snagged the thrush's feathers, she tore in down, and pounced on the bird hard, making sure it doesn't escape. *It's working! I'm going to catch it!* She bit hard into the thrush, and picked it up.

"Rainpaw! Rainpaw! Where are you?" Frostar's panicked call made Rainpaw run faster, the thrush was too fat for her to reply. "Rainpaw!"

"Here!" Rainpaw hurried forward, dropping her prey in front of Frostar and panted.

Frostar's eyes widened, she looked at the thrush, then back at Rainpaw. "Did you catch that?"

"Yes, I did," Rainpaw lowered her head as she replied, she didn't want Frostar to think she was ambitious.

"I don't believe it!" Frostar exclaimed, "your fourth day as an apprentice and you caught that?" She pointed at the thrush.

"You're even more special than I thought, Rainpaw." Frostar's eyes gleamed. *What does she mean? I'm not anything near special!*

"But, I'm not special!" Rainpaw protested.

"You are, Rainpaw, I can feel it, that's why I imade you my apprentice. You are special." Frostar told Rainpaw, her tail touching Rainpaw's shoulder. *I'm special! Frostar said I am! But how?*

Chapter 5

"First, crouch down like this," Flowerpetal instructed them, crouching into a low crouch, paws stretched out. Rainpaw was training with Featherpaw today, they were learning battle moves. Featherpaw followed her mentor's instructions.

But Rainpaw looked uncertainly at Froststar, she was watching them train, and nodded at Rainpaw, whispering, "do what Flowerpetal says." Rainpaw whispered back, "okay then." And followed Featherpaw.

She crouched low, concentrating, trying to learn from everything their mentors do. "No, Rainpaw, put your paws a little further." Flowerpetal told Rainpaw. *Ok! I know that! I was going to do that just now!* Rainpaw sighed, rolling her eyes when Flowerpetal wasn't watching.

"Okay," She fixed her paws into position, replying in a more respectful tone.

"Good job Rainpaw. Featherpaw! Pay more attention to what I say to Rainpaw too! You're making the same mistake as Rainpaw now!" Flowerpetal praised Rainpaw and turned to face Featherpaw angrily. *You should've listened to Flowerpetal, Featherpaw.* Rainpaw tried to hide her giggle, stopping herself at last.

"Sorry," Featherpaw looked embarrassed, quickly fixing her paws like Rainpaw.

"Okay, now let's continue. Let's learn how to pounce first." Flowerpetal sighed, looking at them.

"Ooh! I know how!" Featherpaw jumped up, and her paws were in the air, flailing. "Oomph! Ouch!" Featherpaw's mew sounded in a thistle bush. *Well, that didn't work out.* Rainpaw finally giggled, purring until Flowerpetal's stern mew broke the laughter.

"Now when you apprentices have *stopped*, we can start, finally." Flowerpetal muttered the last word out. *Uh oh, we're in big trouble.* Rainpaw's heart quickened, she didn't want to do the elders ticks!

"Sorry Flowerpetal," Rainpaw apologised immediately, dipping her head to Flowerpetal.

"Yeah, sorry," Featherpaw added, looking genuinely sorry.

"I'll expect you to help the elders clean their moss and do the tick duties after this." Flowerpetal looked sternly at them. Rainpaw sighed, *not again! I hate tick duties!* Flowerpetal turned to Rainpaw, "You don't have to do it, Rainpaw, it's your sister that made you laugh, I understand." Rainpaw breathed in relief. *But Featherpaw has to do it...*

"Fine," Featherpaw muttered, then added, "why can't the elders pull the ticks off themselves?"

"Featherpaw! Show some respect to your elders! You had *better* do *extra* tick duties today!" Flowerpetal growled.

"But..." Featherpaw trailed off, wide eyed with dismay. *I feel sorry for Featherpaw.* Rainpaw looked sympathetically at her littermate, she looked crestfallen.

"No buts! Go *now*!" Flowerpetal cut her off, her tail bushing up, pointing at the elders den and repeated, "NOW!"

Featherpaw trailed off, tail drooping, and headed to the medicine cat den for mouse bile.

"Rainpaw, it wouldn't be fair if you did the training and she didn't, you should go help your sister." Froststar, who had been silent the whole time, spoke up. Rainpaw nodded, padding to the elders den. *I suppose I have to help Featherpaw, she seems so sad!*

Flowerpetal was still fuming with anger, muttering under her breath, "why did I get such an unrespectful apprentice!" *You should be grateful to have an apprentice!* Rainpaw glared at her, stomping off.

Froststar followed, "you can do the tick duties if you want, but if you wouldn't like to, you can not do it. You did well today. I know I just told you to help, but if you don't want to, then you can rest in the apprentice den and wait for her instead of training."

"Wh-wha-but I was troublesome!" Rainpaw turned to look at Froststar in astonishment. *She doesn't care if I do it or not? She just told me to though!*

"No, it was Featherpaw, not you, you were just caught off guard by her, you did great." Her mentor's eyes were warm. *Wow, she really is nice!*

"Thanks, but I would like to help Featherpaw for a little while first. She can't do it all by herself!" Rainpaw told Froststar. *I have to help my sister even though I don't like it.*

"I understand." Froststar nodded, and padded away to her den. *Well, I guess I'm helping Featherpaw!*

"Featherpaw! Featherpaw! I'm here to help you!" Rainpaw called, padding into the den slowly.

"Rainpaw? You're going to help me!" Featherpaw poked out of the den, *ewww, she stinks like mouse bile too!*

Rainpaw hurried in, "yes I am, you can't finish it all you know!"

"Thanks sister," Featherpaw nuzzled her, her warm breath still on Rainpaw's cheek.

"Can't you apprentices just hurry up? What's taking y'all so long?" Whiskerfur mumbled in his cranky voice.

"Apprentices take time." Hawkflight muttered to his den mate.

"Coming!" Rainpaw hurried forward checking for ticks. *They're so ungrateful! Just what I hate about them, but we have to serve them, they were once a good warrior.* Rainpaw had always wondered how these cranky old elders ever was a young warrior that was respectful.

***

"Did you hear? Today is the naming ceremony for Splashnose's kits!" Leafshade, a new warrior of the Clan, murmured to Stonefur.

"That's great news!" Stonefur looked happy, *today is the day! I'll get to train with Willowkit!*

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"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar summoned her Clan in a sudden. Rainpaw hurried forward, *I don't want to miss her naming ceremony!*

"Willowkit, Bramblekit, come forward." Froststar flicked her ear at the two kits. They stepped forward, nervous, but excited.

"Willowpaw, your mentor will be Fernshadow." Froststar turned to look at Fernshadow, "Fernshadow, you are a senior warrior, and have great hunting skills. I hope you pass on all you know to Willowpaw." Froststar announced.

"I will Froststar," Fernshadow vowed, dipping her head and touched noses with Willowpaw. *She's an apprentice now!*

"Bramblepaw, your mentor will be Leafshade." Froststar turned to look at Leafshade, "Leafshade, you are a young warrior, but I have no doubt that you will train him well." Froststar ended as Leafshade bounded up to Bramlepaw and touched noses.

"Willowpaw! Bramblepaw! Willowpaw! Bramblepaw!" The Clan cheered their names, especially Rainpaw, who yowled so hard that her lungs felt dry. *I want to show support to them!*

"Also, Cloudheart and Ashtail says Amberkit wants to be a medicine cat, and I respect that. Please do the ceremony Cloudheart." Froststar continued. *She's going to be a medicine cat!*

Cloudheart dipped his head, and started, "Amberkit, is it your will to become a medicine cat, follow the medicine cat code, and to never have a mate?"

"It is," there was no doubt in her mew.

"Then, by the powers of StarClan, Amberkit will now train as a medicine cat and be known as Amberpaw!" Cloudheart finished.

"Amberpaw! Amberpaw!" The Clan cheered again for their future medicine cat. *I understand why she wants to be a medicine cat now.* Rainpaw looked at Amberpaw understandingly. *I'm also going to train with Bramblepaw! I just have a feeling towards him, he's s-so cute and kind!* Rainpaw's paw's pricked with excitement. *Wait, am I falling In love already?* Rainpaw thought nervously. *I do like him, but does he like me the same way? I don't think so...*

Chapter 6

"Go on! Featherpaw, Rainpaw, you two work together and attack Willowpaw and Bramblepaw." Frostar ordered, while Leafshade, Bramblepaw's mentor, watched in silence. "Willowpaw and Bramblepaw, you two try to fend them off." *That's not quite fair, is it?*

Frostar seemed to read her mind and turned to them again, "you two know they're new apprentices, so don't be hard on them."

"Of course!" Rainpaw exclaimed. *She's my best friend! I'm going to trick her though... it'll be great!*

"I'm going to beat you all!" Bramblepaw boasted.

"You bet! We're way better than you! We *trained* before!" Featherpaw scoffed, rude, but Rainpaw saw that she was just joking.

With a yowl, Bramblepaw charged ahead, tried to pounce on Featherpaw, but she dodged.

Willowpaw was a little more nervous, but charged towards Rainpaw, Rainpaw tensed, and dodged her too. Willowpaw fell heavily, "oomph!" And straightened up.

Willowpaw ran towards Rainpaw again, and Rainpaw let her pounce on her. With a triumphant yowl, Willowpaw and Rainpaw tussled, as Rainpaw remembered her training with Frostar. *Go limp.* Frostar had told her.

Rainpaw relaxed her muscled, allowing herself to be limp. "I got you!" Willowpaw's eyes gleamed, and stood on Rainpaw's underbelly. Frostar looked at Rainpaw, her eyes glowing with pride. *She knows what I'm going to do! And so does Leafshade!*

Rainpaw felt excitement prick through her as Leafshade called to Willowpaw, though eyes gleaming, "great job Willowpaw!"

"Thank..." Willowpaw looked happy, no clue what was about to happen.

Suddenly, Rainpaw surged upwards, pushing Willowpaw off. "Wh-wha?" Willowpaw spluttered unbelievably. Rainpaw didn't waste a breath to answer her.

She pounced onto Willowpaw, driving her breath out. Rainpaw raised her paw on her neck, and Willowpaw's eyes widened as she saw her best friend's menacing gaze. Willowpaw closed her eyes. *She looks so afraid! I got her so good!* Rainpaw almost gave way of her menacing gaze.

She lowered her paw, and went back to normal. "Was that good Froststar?" Rainpaw glanced at her littermate, she was still tussling with Bramblepaw.

"That-that-there is no words! I can't believe you remembered what I told you! I'm so proud." Froststar's tail curled up in amusement as Willowpaw got up.

Leafshade purred, "great move Rainpaw! Great job! Both of you!" He raked his gaze across them.

"What happened?" Bramblepaw panted, he was just beaten down by Featherpaw. *Wow, they really fought!* Rainpaw could see sand, mud, and debris in their pelts, they were ruffled and matted with leaves all over.

Featherpaw shook her pelt, getting off all the debris possible. "Ugh! Disgusting! Bramblepaw, you really fought well!" Featherpaw exclaimed. Bramblepaw's eyes shone in pride at the older apprentice's praise. *They do look battered!* Rainpaw thought, amused.

"You guys really look battered!" Willowpaw stared, looking unbelievably at the two dirty apprentices.

"Yeah," Rainpaw added.

"Great job all of you! You may all go and eat now, go and rest." Frostar flicked her tail, gesturing the training session was over, and added, "Rainpaw, come to my den later, I have to tell you something." There was a strange gleam in her eyes which made Rainpaw nervous but excited.

"Okay," Rainpaw nodded, *is this something about why I'm special?*

"Go on then, get some rest." Frostar followed Rainpaw behind.

"Hey Featherpaw! Willowpaw! Want to share this carp with me?" Rainpaw called to her friends.

"Yes!" Featherpaw, who was sitting beside the fresh-kill pile, turned her head sharply and called back.

"Oh me too!" Willowpaw padded to them, and called to his brother, "wanna come share with us too?" With a 'is that okay?' Look before Rainpaw nodded.

"Coming!" Bramblepaw hurried towards them, smoothing out messy his pelt caused by the training, and joined them. *It's so good being with my Clan,* Rainpaw settled down beside Featherpaw and Willowpaw.

***

"Frostar?" Rainpaw called by the fern tunnel leading into Frostar's den. *What in StarClan is she going to tell me?* Rainpaw wondered, *I'm dying to know!* Rainpaw scuffled the ground with her front paws.

"Come in!" Frostar's voice echoed from her den. Rainpaw padded in slowly, and saw Frostar ahead.

"What are you going to tell me?" Rainpaw finally blurted out.

"As I told you before, you are special." Frostar locked her gaze with Rainpaw's. *But how?*

"I-I-I can't be!" Rainpaw protested like she had the other day. Her mind whirled, her, leader of RainClan, ruling the Clan. *But I can't be*

leader! Right? I'm not good enough!

"Go to Cloudheart, she has something to tell you, not me." Froststar nodded at the medicine cat's den. Rainpaw looked expectantly at her, waiting for her to say more, but she said nothing.

"Okay," Rainpaw dipped her head, and headed out of the den.

"Cloudheart?" Rainpaw asked nervously, she didn't know what to expect. *What is going to happen next?* Rainpaw didn't know, just waited.

"Rainpaw! I have to tell you something." Cloudheart poked out of the den, "come on in! Ashtail is out gathering herbs with Amberpaw!"

"So? What are you going to tell me?" Rainpaw asked, meeting her gaze. Cloudheart's eyes darkened.

"You have a prophecy over you, Rainpaw." Cloudheart told Rainpaw solemnly. *Is that good or bad?*

"What is it?" Rainpaw asked again.

"Listen. *You will be the greatest, you will love a cat who you will need to ignore until you are. Don't let him disturb you!*" Cloudheart told Rainpaw.

I will love a cat? Does she mean Bramblepaw? Surely not! I don't even know if he likes me back! Oh StarClan, what does this mean! Rainpaw felt devastated. *And I will be the greatest? Am I going to become a leader?*

"Thanks for telling me Cloudheart." Rainpaw nodded, still thinking.

"I know it's complicated, just think it through, I understand. You should rest now, Froststar tells me it's been a long day for you." Cloudheart's eyes were sympathetic. Rainpaw gave her thanks, and padded out of the cave. *What could it possibly mean?*

***

Rainpaw curled up in her nest, lost in thought, *if only I knew!* Sighing, she settled down but felt restless. *I do like Bramblepaw, but do I* really *love him? He's nice, but I don't think he would love me.* Rainpaw rolled onto her back, accidentally touching Featherpaw.

"What is it Rainpaw?" Featherpaw's mew was sleepy. *And now I've woken Featherpaw!*

"Nothing, go back to sleep." Rainpaw told her sister softly, Featherpaw mumbled and fell into sleep again. Rainpaw looked at her fall asleep and finally felt a little sleepy, after waiting for what seemed like moons. She yawned and rolled on her side again, feeling less restless, her thoughts cleared, and she drifted into sleep.

Chapter 7

"Goldenfeather, you lead the patrol. Bring Fernshadow and Leafshade with you to patrol the border!" Firefeather ordered, then turned to look at the two mentors, "take your apprentices with you." She finished.

"Yes Firefeather," Leafshade dipped his head to his deputy in respect and went to collect Willowpaw and Bramblepaw. Rainpaw watched, waiting to be called for patrol. *I hope I'm on the hunting patrol!* Rainpaw hoped.

"Rainpaw," her mentor's mew made her turn around.

"What is it?" Rainpaw asked.

"I would like you to train with Featherpaw and Flowerpetal because I have a lot of things to do today." Froststar's eyes told me everything. *What is she going to do today? Is it about my pro—? No, no way.* Rainpaw shook herself, although she felt like it was because of that.

Froststar was looking at Rainpaw questioningly. Rainpaw's attention snapped back and she dipped her head immediately, "of course Froststar! I would love to train with my sister!"

"Good," Froststar nodded, adding, "you can come to the gathering tomorrow, you did well so far. Besides, it's your first gathering!" Before Rainpaw could say thanks, Froststar slowly backed away from Rainpaw, and back to her den. *I'm going to the gathering!*

"Flowerpetal lead a hunting patrol! Take Stonefur, Mousepaw, Rainpaw, and Featherpaw to hunt around The Bird Tree. You five are on hunting patrol!" Firefeather ordered. *Yes! I'm on hunting patrol! And with Mousepaw and Featherpaw!* Rainpaw wanted to yowl in triumph, but managed to stay calm.

"Come on," Flowerpetal beckoned the apprentices forward.

"Hey, it's been a long time since we talked." Mousepaw suddenly nudged Rainpaw. *Mousepaw!*

"Yeah," Rainpaw answered sheepishly, looking at Mousepaw.

"How's it going for you, training." Mousepaw asked suddenly. *Why is he asking?*

"Oh, pretty good!" Rainpaw replied, not sure why he's asking.

"That's good to know." Mousepaw looked at Rainpaw, half blushing. Rainpaw was blushing too, until Featherpaw looked at them.

"Lover cat! Are you in love with Mousepaw now?" Her littermate whispered in her ear. *Am I? I don't think so... I like Bramblepaw more!*

"Of course not!" Rainpaw pushed her sister away while snapping back angrily.

"Okay, okay, calm down, I was just *noticing* something!" Featherpaw protested, backing away. *Yeah right!* Rainpaw shot her sister a angry glare.

"Rainpaw! Featherpaw!" Flowerpetal turned around at the sound of their bickering sounds, Rainpaw's tail drooped and Featherpaw looked at Flowerpetal, lowering her gaze as she saw the furious look in her mentor's eyes. *Great, now we're caught!*

Mousepaw looked at Rainpaw, sympathy welling up in his eyes. He turned and flicked his tail, standing beside his mentor, Stonefur.

"I won't deal with you now, we need to hunt for our Clan. But I'm going to *punish* you both when we're back at camp, and *especially* you Featherpaw! I heard that you started it." Flowerpetal flashed a look at Featherpaw Rainpaw did not know, but it must had been bad, because Featherpaw flinched and backed away from her mentor.

"Sorry," Rainpaw murmured into Featherpaw's ear. "I shouldn't have bickered about it, we're both in trouble now."

"I'm sorry too, I shouldn't have teased you about it." Featherpaw

apologized. *It's my fault, Featherpaw keeps taking the blame for me.*

"It's okay, let's keep going." Rainpaw assured her. She bounded ahead, with Featherpaw following behind. Flowerpetal was still storming with rage as she tore through the brambles.

"We're here!" Flowerpetal seemed to smooth her fur and calm herself down, though her gaze told Rainpaw that she was just trying to calm down.

"Let's hunt!" Mousepaw hurried forward, but Stonefur dragged him back.

"You'll scare all the prey mouse-brain!"

"Sorry," Mousepaw muttered.

"Okay, lets go catch some prey and gather back here later." Flowerpetal told every cat.

"Okay." They all nodded and headed around The Bird Tree.

"Crow!" Rainpaw whispered excitedly to Featherpaw, who was beside her. Rainpaw eyed the crow excitedly, *the scent is blowing towards us, but the crow can't smell us!*

"I know. You can catch it. I'm going to catch the thrush there!" Featherpaw hissed back, nodding silently at the thrush pecking on a worm.

"Sure." Rainpaw replied.

Rainpaw stalked forward, creeping low, she was better now, more cautious than before. She ducked beneath the tree the crow was on, and gave a mighty push. Rainpaw sprang upwards, snagged the crow, and brought it down onto the ground where she could kill it.

Rainpaw gave the crow's neck a bite, and it lay limp. She licked her lips at the taste of crow, but remained silent so she wouldn't ruin Featherpaw's catch. *Thank you StarClan for this prey!* Rainpaw thought.

Featherpaw was narrowing her eyes when a call suddenly came, a bird flew over board and saw Featherpaw, alerting the thrush. But she didn't see it, she pounced just as the thrush flew away, missing it completely. *Oh no, Featherpaw has such bad luck!* Rainpaw sighed, shaking her head sadly.

"Featherpaw! Did you miss that catch?" A stern growl came behind Featherpaw, it was Flowerpetal. *She's already angry enough.* Rainpaw backed away quickly.

"Rainpaw? Was that you?" Flowerpetal turned to stare at Rainpaw, then saw the crow she had caught. "Great catch!" Her sister's mentor praised.

Relief swamped her as she replied, "thanks."

"Featherpaw!" Flowerpetal's through rumbled menacingly. "When you're in a lot of trouble already, you just give me *more* trouble!" She sighed, harassed with Featherpaw's behavior.

"Sorry." Featherpaw didn't dare meet her mentor's gaze. *I feel so bad for her!* Rainpaw looked at Featherpaw, she had only tried her best to catch the thrush, not chased it away!

"*Sorry* catches no prey." Flowerpetal muttered, but relaxed a little bit more.

***

"Now, I can give *you two* your punishments!" Flowerpetal growled, turning to look at both of them one by one. *I hope it's not too bad!* Rainpaw exchanged a nervous glance with Featherpaw, but Featherpaw didn't meet her gaze.

"Rainpaw, you did the least trouble, and caught that fat crow. So you should only get some fresh-kill, water, and change the elder's beddings." Flowerpetal told Rainpaw softly, not in her angry voice. *Phew! But what about...* Rainpaw didn't want to think about it.

"Featherpaw! *You* have made me *very* disappointed in you! My own apprentice! Do you know how embarrassing that is?" Flowerpetal yowled practically in Featherpaw's face as she winced.

"*You!* Are ordered for feeding and companying the elders to give them *anything* they wish for! Half a moon! You will do no patrols, only take care of the elders!" Flowerpetal finished menacingly.

"What? But..." Featherpaw trailed off, but dipped her head. "I'll do that."

"Good." Flowerpetal stomped into the warriorsden.

"Grumpy old badger!" Rainpaw attempted to joke. But Featherpaw didn't reply, just pushed past her and went into the elders den. Rainpaw followed, *Flowerpetal is so mean! I'm glad I got Froststar! She almost never makes me do things!* Rainpaw thought of her own mentor, kind and almost never grumpy, and felt how lucky she was.

I just wish I knew what the prophecy meant!

Chapter 8

"The belly rake. First, leap, then twist." Froststar demonstrated, pushing her hind legs on the ground. She leaped up and twisted, clawing at an imaginary warrior, then landed neatly on four paws. *Wow! That looks... hard.* Rainpaw swallowed nervously at the move, the twist looked very hard and possibly dangerous.

"You try." Froststar stepped aside, nudging Rainpaw forward.

"Okay." Rainpaw replied hesitantly. Bunching her muscles, she leaped, and before she could twist, she landed with a thump, panting for breath. "Sorry," Rainpaw apologized to Froststar through panting breaths.

"It's okay, it's normal to happen on your first try." Froststar told Rainpaw gently. "Watch me again." Froststar flicked her tail, motioning Rainpaw to look. Rainpaw swung her head to face Froststar. Froststar did the belly rake motion again, and Rainpaw watched more carefully how she did the twist.

After a few more tries, Rainpaw almost mastered it. *I'm going to get her now!*

She leaped at Froststar, eyes narrowing as she focused on her mentor's belly, and twisted. She raked her belly with sheathed claws and flung her away with her paws. Froststar didn't even have time to dash away. Froststar landed far away, panting, while Rainpaw landed neatly on four paws.

"Great job!" Froststar dragged herself back to where Rainpaw was, adding, "you've mastered it completely now! I'm sure you'd beat your sister by now. You're a great fighter!" Froststar meowed unsteadily through caught breath.

"Thanks," Rainpaw felt her fur tingle, *am I really that good? I mean, I'm pretty good, but good enough to fight a battle?* Suddenly, Rainpaw felt exhausted by the training, her eyelids flickered a little as they

tried to stay open.

"You may go and rest now, you'll need your strength for tonight's gathering." Froststar glanced at the camp entrance, and nosed Rainpaw, who was almost asleep.

"Okay, thank you." Rainpaw slid out of the den, searching for the apprentices den, *I'm so tired I could sleep on my paws!* Rainpaw yawned, and crept into the apprentices den, crawled into her nest, and fell asleep almost immediately.

***

"Wake up dormouse! It's time for the gathering!" Willowpaw nudged Rainpaw, teasing softly.

"Huh? Wh-what's going on?" Rainpaw awoke dreamily, "the gathering!" Rainpaw suddenly remembered, and leaped up to join Willowpaw. Though it didn't *quite* work out, Rainpaw's muscle still hurt from the earlier battle training with her mentor.

Rainpaw winced as her muscles protested inwardly, pulling her down. But Rainpaw ignored it, and padded up to the clearing. There Firefeather was organizing the patrol to the Fourtrees gathering place.

"Fernshadow, Willowpaw, Leafshade, Bramblepaw, Rainpaw." Firefeather paused suddenly. Turned to Flowerpetal, and asked, "you didn't want Featherpaw to come? And you won't come too?"

"Yes Firefeather, Featherpaw is on Elder duties for half a moon." Flowerpetal flicked her tail angrily.

"Okay. So Stormwing, Lightnose, Streamfur, Stonepelt, Mousepaw, Dapplefur and Honeypaw. Moonshadow, Petalfall, Dewpelt, Snowflake, Shadeclaw, Dawnheart, and Pebbleclaw, you can come too." Firefeather announced, and joined Froststar with the other cats. Rainpaw followed the others ahead, jumping over logs and paths. *Wow, I'm going to the gathering!*

"We're first!" Froststar stopped in front or the Great Rock and the four big oaks. "Gather around, and wait for the others!" She

ordered. Rainpaw obeyed with Willowpaw behind her, and sat next to an oak tree.

"SkyClan is here!" A white tom, Cloudstar, called from somewhere behind Rainpaw.

Then another voice, and another, until every Clan came.

"Ewww, you smell like *heather*!" Willowpaw exclaimed, wrinkling her nose as an apprentice sat beside them. She glanced at them and snorted, "well, you two smell like *reeds*!"

"Let's just listen." Rainpaw broke off the first clue of a fight.

"SkyClan has been well. StarClan has been good to us!" Cloudstar eyed the gathered cats equally. *Yeah right! They looks like they haven't been eating well for moons!*

"We have two new apprentices! Sunpaw and Brightpaw!" Cloudstar announced as the gathered Clans called out their names. Cloudstar continued, "there has been Twoleg scent near WindClan's border, for what I smelled. So every Clan should be warned."

"I knew that. Don't you think WIndClan has *noses*?" Reedstar sniffed.

"Thank you for warning us Cloudstar." Froststar interrupted. Cloudstar nodded, and stepped back for the other leaders to start.

Reedstar stepped forward, and meowed. "Well, you already know about the Twolegs. As Cloudstar said. Prey has been running well for us too, we are well fed. We don't have any new kits yet, but there will be a litter coming soon." He ended, stepping back. *At least he looks well fed.* Rainpaw conceded thoughtfully.

"RainClan has been very well. Prey is running especially well for us, and we have been very successful! There are five new apprentices in RainClan! Rainpaw and Featherpaw have trained for a moon now! And Willowpaw, Bramblepaw, and Amberpaw has been apprenticed this moon!" Froststar flicked her tail, "I know I went through this last time, but they weren't there that time. So I would like to announce it again."

"Rainpaw! Featherpaw! Willowpaw! Bramblepaw! Amberpaw!" The Clans chanted their names, and Rainpaw saw Lightnose singing her daughters name proudly. *She's singing to StarClan!* Rainpaw realized.

"Anyways, RiverClan has been well too. StarClan has given us a lot of fish this moon, and now we have so much we can't even finish it!" Birchstar interrupted the chanting and announced.

"Well, ThunderClan has been well too! We have a new warrior! Welcome Darkclaw!" Rosestar called. The Clans shouted the names of the warriors.

"Leaf-bare is coming soon, and ShadowClan mis preparing for it. But for now, there are no new warriors or apprentices. I hope new kits will come next greenleaf!" Nightstar drooped her head a little, but straightened again.

"I hope you do," Froststar answered hopefully, while Runningstar, the WindClan leader nodded in agreement.

"It's always good news to have kits. On that thought, I'd better announce that WindClan has a new queen, Skyheart!" Runningstar announced gleefully.

"That's good to hear," Rosestar meowed, and added, "I suppose Redstripe is the father?" nodding respectfully to the brown red warrior who was puffing his chest out.

"Yes." Runningstar replied, satisfaction showing through his guarded expression.

The Clans shared tongues and talked about their life in the Clan. After a while, Froststar called for RainClan to go back to camp.

"RainClan follow me!" Froststar waved her tail, and waited for her Clan to catch up as they headed back to camp. *That was such a fun journey!* Rainpaw was still energized from the journey.

Chapter 9

"Froststar?" Rainpaw asked hesitantly, she could smell RiverClan scent along the border as they were setting the border markers.

"Yes Rainpaw?" Froststar turned around, then froze, "do you smell that? RiverClan!" Froststar hissed.

"That's what I was about to tell you!" Rainpaw told Froststar. *Is RiverClan invading?*

"Come with me, and *stay quiet*," Froststar warned Rainpaw, and they slithered into a tree trunk beside The Stream where they had scented RiverClan. *I hope they don't attack us!*

"It's okay Rainpaw, they're just leaving their scent like us. Let's go back to camp now." Froststar's fur smoothed again, and padded back to the camp.

"Okay," Rainpaw followed her mentor slowly, still worried about RiverClan. *Is it really okay? Because I think RiverClan is going to cause some trouble.*

***

"Firefeather! Firefeather!" Sparrowtail's hunting patrol with Goldenfeather, Dewpelt, and Petalfall came rushing in, calling the deputy's name frantically.

"What's happened?" Firefeather rushed out of the warrior's den, panic showing through her gaze.

"It's RiverClan!" Sparrowtail growled.

"They've crossed our border and *hunted* on our territory!" Goldenfeather reported, rushing.

Dewpelt kneaded the ground, "let's deal with them right away!"

"I'll go report to Froststar now."Firefeather rushed into Froststar's den. *Is there going to be a battle? I knew something was going on!* Rainpaw panicked, she only knew so much!

"Hey Rainpaw! I hope RiverClan is going to get beaten!" Featherpaw bounded up to Rainpaw and with sheathed claws, swiped the air.

"Well, Froststar hasn't decided yet." Rainpaw reminded her sister.

"Even if she *does*, Featherpaw, you will not be allowed to go *unless* Froststar orders you to." Flowerpetal came to a stop where the two sisters were. At that, Featherpaw's tail drooped.

"That's not fair! I don't get to do anything!" Featherpaw argued helplessly.

"Who told you to scare off your prey *and* mess around while hunting!" Flowerpetal told Featherpaw sternly. *I hope we don't need that many warriors! It's dangerous.* Rainpaw shuddered at the thought.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar jumped onto the Highrock swiftly.

"Meeting!" Willowpaw hurried forward as Rainpaw followed behind.

"What is it about Rainpaw?" Willowpaw asked.

"I dunno, probably about the RiverClan scent thing." Rainpaw whispered to Willowpaw.

"Ooh, a battle! I hope there is one! I learned so much with Fernshadow!" Willowpaw bounced around excitedly. Then blushed suddenly. "And Leafshade," She lowered her voice, looking at the warrior.

"That's great! I see you've got an eye on him." Rainpaw teased. *Why don't I feel ready even when Willowpaw is ready then?*

"Well, uh, he's nice, you know, friendly?" Willowpaw stammered.

Rainpaw purred, "I know, I've got an eye on Bramblepaw mind you, he's nice too!"

"I'll get in a good word for you!" Willowpaw's eyes sparkled.

"Yeah, thanks." Rainpaw purred, but Frostar's mew broke her off.

"Today! Sparrowtail's patrol has found scents that RiverClan has hunted on our side of the border!" Frostar announced, flicking her gaze to everyone.

"Shred them!" Some cat yelled.

"We'll beat them easily!" Rainpaw's mother yowled.

"We will attack," Frostar eyed all of her warriors.

"Yes!" yowls of triumph rose from the gathered cats.

"But not until they come to attack us *here*." Frostar ended.

"What?" Sparrowtail rose from the gathered cats and yelled. "If we don't attack, they'll think we're weak!" His eyes narrowed.

"Yes, but if they come here again, we attack." Frostar stayed calm as her warriors protested. *She's so reasonable, I wish I could be like her someday!* She waited as her warriors settled down, and no cat protested.

"It's a deal then, we'll attack as soon as they step paw into our border again!" Frostar concluded.

As the Clan was about to break up, Frostar announced again, "there are two warriors I want to make!" Mousepaw and Honeypaw's ears pricked, and their eyes lightened up as they figured out they were going to be apprenticed.

"Mousepaw and Honeypaw!" Willowpaw exclaimed, "lucky them!"

"Yeah, I wish I was a warrior!" Rainpaw agreed, looking enviously at the two older apprentices. *Lucky!*

"Mousepaw and Honeypaw, you have both passed the warrior assessment and is ready t o become a warrior!" Froststar flicked her tail to beckon them forward.

"I, Froststar, leader of RainClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these apprentices. They have trained well to learn your noble code and is ready to become a warrior in their turn."

She paused, and continued, "Mousepaw, Honeypaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?" Froststar eyed the two apprentices expectantly. *I wonder what their names are!*

"I do," Mousepaw replied without a doubt.

"I do," Honeypaw's mew came out as a loud whisper, but there was no doubt she wasn't ready.

"Then, by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names. Mousepaw, Honeypaw, from this moment on you will be known as Mouseheart and Honeyfur! StarClan honors your loyalty and your courage to defend your Clan." Froststar ended, eyes fixed on the two warriors.

"Mouseheart! Honeyfur! Mouseheart! Honeyfur!" The Clan cheered the names of the new warriors. *Mouseheart and Honeyfur! Such wonderful names!*

Willowpaw was beside her, "we have new warriors now!"

"We're as strong as ever!" Rainpaw nodded. *And we will be able to fight off RiverClan now for sure!* New confidence flowed through Rainpaw. *We will win this battle!*

***

"Froststar!" Pebbleclaw bursted out of the entrance of the camp, and ran to report to Froststar. Rainpaw followed, curious. *It's probably the RiverClan cats now.*

"What's happening?" Froststar turned to look at Pebbleclaw, she was calm, but through her words, Rainpaw could detect fear.

"RiverClan has attacked!" Pebbleclaw's eyes were wide, "I-I was just hunting, then the RiverClan cats came charging in so I..." She stammered.

"Okay, Firefeather!" Froststar called the deputy's name.

"What do you need?" Firefeather asked.

"Organize a battle patrol! Now! RiverClan has invaded! Quick!" Froststar explained in a hurry, *she's panicking.* Rainpaw realized, *leaders are scared too!*

"Of course!" Firefeather hurried off to gather a patrol.

"Goldenfeather, Stonepelt, Stormwing, Lightnose, Streamfur, Sparrowtail, Pebbleclaw, Fernshadow, Leafshade, Flowerpetal." Firefeather suddenly hesitated. *She must be thinking about Featherpaw.* Rainpaw thought.

"Dawnheart, Mouseheart, Rainpaw, Willowpaw, and Bramblepaw and I will come too." Firefeather finished, and the cats who were called quickly gathered behind her.

Amberpaw and Cloudheart was at the in front of the medicine cat den, their herbs ready.

"I hope I remember my herbs!" Rainpaw heard Amberpaw murmur nervously. *She must feel so responsible.* Rainpaw looked sympathetically at her.

"I'm so nervous!" Rainpaw suddenly whispered to Willowpaw. *What if I don't remember my moves like Amberpaw's scared she'll forget her herbs! StarClan help me!* Rainpaw suddenly panicked, fear rushed through her, but then, she calmed down. *I'll be okay, the warriors will help me.*

"Me too! But it's exciting!" Willowpaw exclaimed, and bounded ahead. *I guess.* Rainpaw followed slowly.

Ahead, they could see the RiverClan cats unsheathing their claws and in their battle stances.

The Stream was swarming with cats, and Fishleap suddenly looked around, asking his Clanmates, alarmed, "does anyone smell... RainClan?" He didn't even get to finish. *We're going to win! We have more cats than them, and we know the territory more than they do!* Rainpaw felt confident now.

Chapter 10

"RainClan attack!" Firefeather yowled a signal.

"RiverClan attack!" RiverClans deputy yowled.

Rainpaw rushed forward, picking on a huge tabby tom with Willowpaw behind her. Rainpaw unsheathed her claws, ready to claw at the warrior.

"Together," Willowpaw hissed, and Rainpaw nodded, *I can't do this by myself either!*

They pounced, clawing at the warrior. He didn't budge at the blows, but just gave both of them a hard bite on their fur. Rainpaw screeched and Willowpaw winced, but kept clawing.

Rainpaw suddenly remembered the belly rake move, and concentrated. "Help me Rainpaw!" Willowpaw yelled in confusion as Rainpaw halted, but she ignored her. *Aim at his belly, now!* She pounced, leaping up, and twisted, unsheathing her claws in mid-air.

She clawed furiously at the warrior's belly, *how dare you hurt my best friend!* She growled suddenly, and new energy surged through her. She flung the warrior away with a hard push at his belly.

"Ow!" The warrior screeched somewhere behind her. *I've just thrown him like prey!* Rainpaw thought triumphantly.

"Wow! Great job!" Willowpaw exclaimed.

"Yeah, one down, but we've got more to go!" Rainpaw rushed ahead and met an apprentice, it was smaller than Rainpaw, about the same size as Willowpaw.

The tiny apprentice looked wide eyed at Rainpaw, but she took no notice. Rainpaw pounced at the apprentice, and the apprentice screeched in pain, backing away quickly.

"Such a scardey-mouse!" Willowpaw scoffed, and followed Rainpaw to get the apprentice. *It's just an apprentice like us... no, who am I kidding? He's my enemy!* Rainpaw flung herself at the apprentice again, and this time, the apprentice fought back. He growled, and clawed Rainpaw's flank.

Rainpaw felt pain rush through her, but didn't show weakness, Willowpaw clawed the apprentice's nose, and scarlet blood dripped out. With a yowl, the apprentice rolled on the ground in pain, and pounced onto Willowpaw's back, they tussled together as Rainpaw slashed at the apprentices back, making it get off Willowpaw.

It yowled again and backed off, running back into the crowd of cats.

"Let's go get fighting!" Rainpaw growled, and saw the RiverClan deputy, Riverflow, fighting Bramblepaw, he was bleeding badly and was about to fall unconscious. *Bramblepaw!* Rainpaw thought urgently, and was about to tell Willowpaw.

"Bramblepaw!" Willowpaw's eyes widened. Rainpaw didn't reply, but ran ahead as fast as she could and creeped up behind Riverflow.

Willowpaw followed silently, seeming to know what Rainpaw was thinking about.

Rainpaw pounced, slashing at the deputy's back, and growled in his ear. "Stop torturing apprentices, will you?" With a furious growl, the deputy, shook Rainpaw off, but Willowpaw clawed his nose as he did with the apprentice. The deputy didn't even scream.

Bramblepaw quickly backed away to find another warrior, and breathed, "thanks,"

"No problem." Rainpaw panted.

The deputy just stomped forward, about to bite into Willowpaw's neck. "You won't!" Rainpaw yelled, biting his tail hard. The deputy yowled furiously, shaking blood off of his tail.

"Thanks," Willowpaw panted, but Rainpaw just flicked her tail in acknowledgement. She ran, pouncing on the deputy's back, and bit into his scruff.

"Mrroww! That hurts!" Riverflow tried to shake Rainpaw off, but was too feeble to do anything. *He looks beaten up, which means we should let him go.* Rainpaw thought grimly. Waving her tail at Willowpaw, signaling to back off, Willowpaw nodded, backing away.

"RiverClan, retreat!" Riverflow gathered up his strength and called the warriors back.

"Who is he kidding? We were supposed to *win* this battle, not lose it!" Rainpaw heard one of them complain. *Do you even know how badly hurt your deputy is?* Rainpaw thought, amused.

"That was... intense" Willowpaw fought to find the words.

Rainpaw purred, "we chased off that stupid deputy at least!"

"Yeah, we make a great team!" Willowpaw agreed.

"Let's go report back to Firefeather." Rainpaw padded back to where the RainClan cats were.

"Is every cat here now?" Firefeather asked.

"No," Streamfur answered grimly, the deputy swung her gaze to him.

"Who?"

"Fernshadow..." Rainpaw's father replied, sorrow filled his gaze as he flicked his tail at the body.

"No!" Willowpaw wailed, "not my mentor!"

"I'm so sorry," Rainpaw murmured to her friend. But Willowpaw was too sad to reply.

"Willowpaw..." Bramblepaw limped forward, touching his nose to his sister's flank. *Not Fernshadow!* Rainpaw wanted to scream.

"Oh, Fernshadow, you were a great friend." Firefeather murmured softly.

Lightnose and Streamfur twined their tails together as they mourned the fallen warrior. Rainpaw ran towards them, and buried her muzzle into theirs. *I know I look like a kit, but...* Rainpaw thought helplessly.

"Is anyone badly hurt then?" Firefeather straightened up.

"No, not me," Rainpaw lied, it stung like fire had burned her pelt.

"Not me," Willowpaw whispered in a small voice.

Bramblepaw shifted his paws, looking like he's wondering if he should tell the deputy. *He doesn't need to, cause I will!* Rainpaw pointed at Bramblepaw, "well, he is *really* badly hurt."

"It's not that bad." Bramblepaw protested, though his fur was stained with blood. Firefeather's eyes widened as she saw the damage.

"You'd better get to Cloudheart, now!" She ordered, and Bramblepaw dipped his head, and headed back inside the camp.

"If you think your wound really needs treating, go to Cloudheart first!" Firefeather ordered the warriors. *Should I go? Maybe second, I'm not that badly hurt.* Rainpaw hesitated, her wounds stung like fury, but she didn't want to go first since there were cats that had way more serious wounds than her.

Willowpaw and Rainpaw exchanged a glance, and Rainpaw shook her head, *let's go second.* Rainpaw willed Willowpaw to understand, and she nodded, though her gaze was still sorrowful.

"Okay, stay still." Cloudheart slapped some cobweb on Rainpaw's wound that was bleeding badly. Rainpaw winced, *it hurts so much! Can I even handle this much?* Rainpaw doubted she could, but was quite confident she could at the same time.

"Here, eat some of this, this will soothe your shock." Cloudheart put some herbs in front of Rainpaw.

Rainpaw nodded, and licked up the herbs, screwing up her face, but tried to stay calm. Swallowing, Rainpaw licked her lips, trying to

get the foul taste off.

"You're good to go now. You'd better get some sleep if you're going to sit vigil for Fernshadow tonight." Cloudheart told Rainpaw after he finished putting on her wounds.

"Okay," Rainpaw dipped her head and limped into the apprentices den. Her wound still hurt, but she ignored it. *A good warrior wouldn't get beaten down by wounds! I have to stay strong!* Rainpaw shuffled in her nest, and closed her eyes, waiting for sleep to come.

Chapter 11

"Come on Willowpaw, let's go sit vigil." Rainpaw coaxed Willowpaw who was sitting still as rock, staring at her former mentor's body. Willowpaw looked blankly at her, but walked out to the heart of the camp. *It's so painful for Willowpaw!* Rainpaw sighed, hoping she could have taken the pain away from her friend.

"We have lost a warrior today," Froststar for once sounded sorrowful, her head drooped, and her tail drooped along with it.

"She was a fine warrior, she fought for her Clan to get The Stream back, we will not lose The Stream after her death now! We will not give up! Fernshadow will be missed, but life still goes on!" Froststar suddenly looked more energetic. The Clan was more happy, too. *Yes! We will protect our Stream! RiverClan won't beat us!*

Froststar looked expectantly at Firefeather, who was next to speak. "She was... she was a great warrior, and she always brought back prey for the Clan." Firefeather lowered her gaze sadly, shaking her head.

"She helped out a lot in battle and saved my life once." Goldenfeather dipped her head at the dead body, "she was a good friend."

"She was such a good cat, so kind, and just... so loyal." Stormwing choked out finally after pausing for a long time. Splashnose's tail rested on her mate's shoulder, comforting him.

The cats gathered around the dead warrior spoke one by one.

"She was a great mentor," Willowpaw murmured, sorrow filled her gaze.

Rainpaw struggled to find words, *what can I say?* "She-she taught us battle moves," Rainpaw finally spoke. She suddenly remembered the moves she had learnt with her. *I miss those days,* Rainpaw's heart

suddenly ached.

The Clan sat vigil for Fernshadow the whole night, and no one spoke, silence rose through the clearing. Rainpaw watched the sun rise above her, *finally morning.* She thought.

Finally, dawn came, the cats yawned, stretching because of the stiffness of the night. It was cold yesterday, and every cat who sat vigil was stiff, tired.

"Rainpaw, you may go rest, you've sat vigil, and you must be tired." Froststar told Rainpaw with sleepy eyes, though her voice remained clear.

Rainpaw yawned, "thanks Froststar," She mumbled off into the warriors den.

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"Willowpaw? Do you want to train with us for now? Froststar says she'll announce your new mentor later." Rainpaw prompted her friend.

"Okay," Willowpaw murmured, still mourning. She was much better now, but still not over with the grief.

Rainpaw nudged her onto her paws, and led the way to the hollow. *It must be so hard for her, losing her mentor.* She sighed.

"Okay Willowpaw, has your... your... former mentor taught you the belly rake yet?" Froststar searched for the words. Willowpaw just shook her head.

"Okay, Rainpaw, you can show Willowpaw the move first." Froststar told Rainpaw. Then turned to Willowpaw, "watch carefully now." Willowpaw nodded, her gaze fixed on Rainpaw.

"Okay!" Rainpaw bounded forward, crouching down, and narrowed her eyes at the spot where she imagined the warrior would be. Then leaped, her muscles tending as she twisted, and landed on four paws.

"Good, now Willowpaw, did you see how she twisted? In a swift movement." Froststar prompted.

"Yeah! That was awesome Rainpaw!" Willowpaw stared at Rainpaw in awe, all her grief forgotten. *At least she's happy now.* Rainpaw was rejoiced to see her friend so normal today, it had been days since she had been this happy.

"You try now, focus on an imaginary warrior, and try to do the move." Froststar paused, then asked, "or do you need Rainpaw to show you again?"

"No, I think I know how." Willowpaw crouched down, thinking hard for a moment, and made Rainpaw think she wouldn't leap, but suddenly, Willowpaw pounced forward. Her leap was good but she wasn't able to twist in time, and landed badly. "Oomph!"

"Well, can you see what you did wrong?" Froststar asked Willowpaw.

"I twisted too late." Willowpaw meowed through panting breaths.

"Great. Now try again, after you think you're ready." Froststar told Willowpaw.

They practiced all afternoon, until Bramblepaw came in.

"Hey! I've learned that move too! Look at meeeee!" Bramblepaw boasted, crouching down and leaped forward, his muscles were bunched together, and he twisted, it was perfect. Just that he forgot to land on four paws, and landed on his back.

"Ummm," Rainpaw and Willowpaw looked at Bramblepaw together, his fur was ruffled, sand in his pelt.

"Come on! I *almost* got it!" Bramblepaw complained, flicking a leaf off of his nose angrily.

"Well, you'd better master it *before* you brag!" Rainpaw purred, joking. *He's quite good. For an apprentice younger than me.* Rainpaw was impressed by his skill. *He'll make a good warrior one day. And maybe even my mate!* Rainpaw suddenly thought, *no way, what am I*

thinking? I'm too young for this... Rainpaw was humiliated by this thought, how could she have thought that they would be mates. *I'm such a fish-brain.* Rainpaw shook her head to clear away her thoughts, and padded towards Froststar.

"How did we do?" Rainpaw asked, still in her thoughts.

"You two were perfect." Froststar touched her nose to Rainpaw's. "Also, I will announce Willowpaw's new mentor." Froststar's eyes glittered. *She at least has someone in mind!* Rainpaw was excited even though it wasn't for her.

"Go and rest, just wait for the ceremony. After that, you should go see the elders for ticks." Froststar told Rainpaw.

"Okay fine." Rainpaw yawned, feeling sleepy at the thought of elders ticks. *Mouse bile, disgusting.* Rainpaw suddenly wrinkled her nose at the thought of the stench of mouse bile and shuddered. *Ugh, I could never get it off me for a lifetime!* But didn't complain, and padded into the den to rest.

***

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar's yowl woke Rainpaw up. *Willowpaw's new mentor!* Rainpaw hurried outside, eager to see who was going to be appointed. Willowpaw was much better now, more happy.

"I wonder who's my mentor!" Willowpaw bounced excitedly around Rainpaw.

"Yeah, me too." Rainpaw agreed.

"It is time for me to announce Willowpaw's new mentor!" Froststar raked her gaze over all the cats, and fixed on Willowpaw. "Willowpaw, come." Willowpaw trembled slightly, and stepped forward. *I'm so glad she's finally getting a new mentor!* Rainpaw looked at Willowpaw warmly.

"Firefeather! You will be Willowpaw's mentor. You are a great deputy, and I hope you will give Willowpaw the strength." Froststar

announced. *The deputy!* Rainpaw was looking at Willowpaw in surprise, but wasn't jealous at all, instead, she was proud. *She's had so much pain over Fernshadow, I hope she'll be better now.* Rainpaw purred happily.

"I will Froststar," Firefeather dipped her head solemnly.

"Good, then the meeting is over." Froststar jumped off of the Highrock, and padded back into her den.

"What? Rainpaw, how? This is unbelievable! How come I get the deputy? Wha...?" Willowpaw was shocked by the sudden change of mentors.

"It's okay, you're going to be just fine!" Rainpaw encouraged. *She is going to be perfect!*

"Thanks Rainpaw, but I don't think I can..." Willowpaw shook her head, confusion still wavering in her.

"Just try, I was overwhelmed when I had Froststar as my mentor too." Rainpaw assured her friend.

"Okay, I guess," Willowpaw was still unsure, but she had new confidence in her now. Her eyes gleamed happily, and she was much more energetic. *We'll train together lots now! I'm so glad!*

Chapter 12

"Willowpaw! Featherpaw! Come and help me!" Rainpaw called to her denmates.

"Okay! Be patient." Featherpaw muttered, but padded towards Rainpaw.

"Coming!" Willowpaw speeded up, catching up to Rainpaw in a heartbeat.

"Well, who's got the mouse bile?" Rainpaw asked looking at her friends.

"Me." Featherpaw muttered, "why did I get the mouse bile anyways. Ugh. Disgusting!" Featherpaw complained to herself.

"We didn't tell you to!" Willowpaw protested.

"Whatever." Featherpaw catches up to them.

Rainpaw rolled her eyes dramatically, "so when are we going into the den now?"

"Now!" Willowpaw raced into the den and called, "whoever's last to be in the den is a fish-brain!"

"Hey! Not fair!" Rainpaw yelled, and sped ahead as quick as possible with Featherpaw at her tail, dirt sprayed all over Featherpaw and she shouted. *I'm going to reach it first!*

"Rainpaw!" Featherpaw stormed forwards, but Rainpaw was quicker, she stepped into the elders den a heartbeat before Featherpaw.

"You're a fish brain!" Rainpaw teased Featherpaw.

"Who told you to spray dirt all over me!" Featherpaw grumbled, shaking her pelt so that the dirt would get off.

"Umm," Rainpaw and Willowpaw exchanged glances. "Let's just pretend that never happened..." Featherpaw rolled her eyes.

"So are you apprentices gonna even do our ticks or just stand there waiting for fresh-kill to fly into your mouth huh?" Whiskerfur complained. *Oops!*

"Sorry," Rainpaw quickly hurried towards Whiskerfur while the other two apprentices went to Grassfur and Snowflake.

"That's much better," Whiskerfur grunted. *Whatever, let's just get this over with.* Rainpaw screwed up her nose.

"Do y'all want to hear a story of how I chased a huge dog away?" Hawkflight asked the apprentices. *Oh yes!* Rainpaw jumped excitedly.

"Yes! Please?" Featherpaw begged.

"O' course," Hawkflight shuffled into a good position and began. "So when I was a young 'un like you, and I was hunting until I saw this huge dog! It was massive, as big as two cats!" Hawkflight's eyes widened, and his fur bushed up into twice his size.

"Woah, and you fought it off?" Rainpaw stared at the elder in awe.

"Yeah, it almost bit me and I could've died!" Hawkflight's voice deepened, eyes darkening.

"Oh no!" Willowpaw breathed.

"Hey, don't stop!" Whiskerfur snapped at Rainpaw, she was so interested in the story she forgot that she was pulling off ticks.

"Oops, sorry!" Rainpaw quickly dabbed a tick with mouse bile, and it came off. "So then I ran and ran, and the dog chased and chased. I couldn't get it to leave me alone!" Hawkflight continued.

"And then?" Willowpaw and Featherpaw asked Hawkflight eagerly.

"So then I had to fight it! I clawed it's muzzle and blood sprayed everywhere! It snapped at me and bit my leg! It was so painful I

could hardly even fight!" Hawkflight closed his eyes as if he was there again. *Wow, that must have been scary!* Rainpaw thought in dismay.

They spent the morning doing ticks and listening to Hawkflight's story.

***

"Leafshade, Rainpaw, me, Willowpaw will go on the dawn patrol. Leafshade can lead it." Firefeather ordered. The sun was rising and it was dawn now. *Dawn patrol.* Rainpaw sighed, at least she was with Willowpaw.

"I'm with Leafshade and you!" Willowpaw whispered to Rainpaw, eyes sparkling happily. *Well, it seems like Willowpaw likes Leafshade now.* Rainpaw suppressed a purr of amusement.

"What?" Willowpaw looked flustered, "I just like him!" She nudged Rainpaw, "didn't you say you liked Bramblepaw?"

"Umm, never mind about that..." Rainpaw muttered.

"Hey Willowpaw! I missed you!" Leafshade padded beside Willowpaw, and their fur touched.

Willowpaw blushed, and stammered, "I-I-uh-missed-uh-you-too-uh!" Leafshade and Willowpaw locked their eyes together for a few heartbeats. Firefeather and Rainpaw exchanged glances of amusement and Rainpaw knew the deputy was also thinking, *they're definitely in love.* Rainpaw giggled, which made Willowpaw and Leafshade break their locked gaze.

"Uhhh," Willowpaw and Leafshade broke apart immediately, "did you-uh-see-uh what we-uh did?" Willowpaw hissed at Rainpaw.

"Yup, I saw *everything,* but don't worry! I'm fine with it." Rainpaw flicked her tail mischievously. *And you two are going to have wonderful kits!* Rainpaw wanted to add, but swallowed back the words.

"Uh, just *please* don't tell Bramblepaw or any cat!" Willowpaw

begged, shuffling her paws in dismay.

"Come on," Leafshade tried to hide his embarrassment. *Romantic.* Rainpaw thought in disgust, rolling her eyes.

"Any scents?" Rainpaw asked, *I can't smell any anyways.*

"Nope," Willowpaw sniffed the air, and shook her head.

"I can't smell any either." Firefeather replied, nodding.

"Can we go catch some prey?" Rainpaw asked, licking her lips. "My belly thinks my throat is clawed out!" She exaggerated.

"Of course!" Leafshade agreed, "I'm quite hungry too!"

"Come on!" Willowpaw urged, "I think I smell *squirrel!*"

"I'll go by The Stream if that's okay, I'm going to catch some fish." Rainpaw suggested.

"Sure Rainpaw, you can go, meet us back at camp." Leafshade nodded.

"Make sure to bring some prey back too for the Clan!" Firefeather called to Rainpaw.

"Okay! I will!" Rainpaw promised them, and bounded back into the direction of the camp.

***

"Hey Ashtail, Cloudheart, and Amberpaw! I've brought you fresh-kill," Rainpaw padded into the den, dropping the prey at the medicine cat's paws.

"Thanks Rainpaw! I'm sooo hungry!" Amberpaw thanked Rainpaw.

"No problem old friend! Always here to help!" Rainpaw joked. *It's so good to talk to her again! I know it hasn't been long but it seems so distant!*

"Rainpaw, come," Cloudheart rose to her paws.

"What?" Rainpaw was confused now.

"We need to talk," Cloudheart explained.

"Okay," Rainpaw felt uncomfortable, but followed Cloudheart. *There's something she's not telling me.*

"So?" Rainpaw prompted when they were out of sight.

"Did you think of the prophecy?" Cloudheart asked after a few heartbeats.

"What? I don't know what it means yet!" Rainpaw was caught off guard. *I mean, I do, but it can't be possible!*

"Good, so you did think of it." Cloudheart nodded.

"Can you tell me what it means?" Rainpaw begged. *Just tell me! And everything would be much clearer!*

"I do not hold the answers Rainpaw, you have to figure it out yourself. Even StarClan may not always hold the answers, but they trust *you* to figure it out." Cloudheart shook her head.

"I guess," Rainpaw fought to yell, *do you know how hard that is? Ugh!* But stopped herself.

"I know it's hard Rainpaw, but you will be able to." Cloudheart seemed to read her thoughts.

"Maybe," Rainpaw wasn't confused by the prophecy. *I kind of do know, but how can it be that I'm going to be a leader? And someone I love is going to distract me? I don't know!*

Chapter 13

"Rainpaw," a soft mew made Rainpaw jump. *Who?*

"Froststar!" Rainpaw sighed, happy to see her mentor.

"Rainpaw, I want to give you your warrior assessment today." Froststar told Rainpaw seriously. *What?*

Rainpaw's jaws gaped open in surprise, "me? Today? I'm going to be a warrior?"

"Yes," Froststar looked proud of her. *Really? What's going to be my name? Hmmm, maybe Rainheart? Or Rainwing, ooh.* Rainpaw guessed excitedly.

"Do I start *now*?" Rainpaw asked her mentor.

"Yes, I will be watching you remember, your first test is hunting." Froststar reminded her, and Rainpaw nodded, "so you can go hunt now."

"Okay," Rainpaw ran into the woods as quick as possible, *I can see a rabbit already!* Rainpaw's heart pounded.

She crept forward, the wind was blowing her way, which made the rabbit unaware of her existence. Rainpaw stopped behind the rabbit, ready to pounce. *Froststar's watching, I hope she approves!* Rainpaw thought, happy to think Froststar was watching.

She pounced, and the rabbit gave a shriek, but was abruptly cut off. Rainpaw dug her claws in and bit its neck. *I caught it! But I should catch more, maybe Froststar wouldn't be impressed.*

Rainpaw sniffed the air for more scents, but before she could smell anything, a familiar voice made Rainpaw jump. "Great catch!"

"Froststar! You scared me!" Rainpaw turned around, her heart beating fast.

"Oops, sorry, but that was great!" Frostar praised her.

"Thanks." Rainpaw looked at her catch and added, "it wasn't a lot though,"

"It was perfect!" Frostar assured her, "you passed the test."

"Really?" Rainpaw stared at her mentor in disbelief. *But it wasn't even a big catch!*

"Yes," Frostar nodded, her eyes glittering. And announced to her, "your next assessment is your battling with Featherpaw to test your battle skills."

"Okay, so do we meet her in the training hollow now?" Rainpaw asked. *Ooh, fighting! Featherpaw and I are going to be warriors at last!*

"Yes, come on, let's go." Frostar padded back to camp, her tail twitching. *I'm so excited!*

"Hello Flowerpetal," Frostar greeted Featherpaw's mentor as they got to the training hollow. "How did Featherpaw do?"

"She did great, she caught a thrush!" Flowerpetal told Frostar. *Well, for once she's complimenting Featherpaw!* Rainpaw swallowed back a purr.

"Rainpaw was great too, she caught a rabbit." Frostar nodded, "let's start."

Featherpaw narrowed her eyes at her littermate. She whispered, "I'm so glad we're going to be warriors!"

"Me too! But we'd better pass this first!" Rainpaw whispered back, and crouched into the battle stances. Rainpaw darkened her gaze, and flattened her ears, the air around her stiffened. *I hope we pass!*

Featherpaw suddenly leaped at Rainpaw, she was surprised, but managed to get out of the way right before her sister got her. Rainpaw dodged, and twisted, rearing up her front paw to meet her sister. Featherpaw clawed at Rainpaw, *this is my chance!* She pounced on Featherpaw's back, forcing her to the ground.

Featherpaw didn't give up, she kicked Rainpaw's underbelly. And sprang upwards, flinging Rainpaw away.

Rainpaw landed with a thump, and got up, wincing. She flung herself at her sister, pressing her paws down. Featherpaw fell limp, *she's tricking me! I won't fall for it!* Rainpaw knew her sister was just trying to fake it. Rainpaw pressed down even harder. Featherpaw tried to leap upwards, but failed, although she did make Rainpaw release her grip a little more.

"Okay, you two did great!" Froststar stopped the two fighting cats. Rainpaw released her grip on Featherpaw, waiting for her to get up.

"You two passed." Flowerpetal agreed.

"Really?" Rainpaw and Featherpaw both asked, eyes wide. *Wow! We're going to be warriors!*

"Yes, you two should go rest now, you'll need your energy for your vigil. I'll do your naming ceremony at Moonhigh." Froststar told the two apprentices.

"Okay," Rainpaw replied grudgingly. *I feel like I could run through the whole forest in a heartbeat!* But she made no protest.

"Willowpaw! I passed!" Rainpaw rushed into the den to meet her best friend.

"Really? That's great!" Willowpaw didn't show jealousy at all, "I'm so proud!"

"Thanks," Rainpaw licked her chest fur embarrassedly. And settled down into sleep.

***

"I see you've passed!" Lightnose and Streamfur padded up to Rainpaw, who was waiting for her and Featherpaw's naming ceremony.

"Yeah! I did! I wonder what my name will be!" Rainpaw bounced up and down at the sight of her parents excitedly.

"I couldn't be more proud." They murmured, eyes shining approvingly.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar's yowl rang in the clearing.

"I'd better go," Rainpaw told her mother and father. *I'm so excited!*

"Okay," Lightnose looked at her lovingly, and sadness glistened through her eyes. Rainpaw dipped her head and went to join Featherpaw beneath the Highrock.

"We have new warriors to make today! Rainpaw and Featherpaw have both passed their assessment and is ready to become warriors!" Froststar announced, fixing her gaze onto Featherpaw and Rainpaw's. Rainpaw and Featherpaw exchanged a excited glance, and straightened up.

"I, Froststar, leader of RainClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these apprentices. They have trained well to learn your noble code and is ready to become a warrior in their turn." Froststar raked her gaze over her Clan, and continued. *What's my name? What's my name?* Rainpaw scuffled the ground impaitiently.

"Rainpaw, Featherpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to defend and protect your Clan, even at the cost of your life?" Froststar asked, and Rainapw tensed. *This is it!*

"I do," Rainpaw couldn't help but give a hint of excitement through her mew.

"I do," Featherpaw promised solemnly.

"Then, by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names." Froststar's eyes glowed.

"Featherpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Featherhawk! StarClan honors your bravery in battle, and no one doubts your loyalty to your Clan." Froststar announced. *What is mine? Featherhawk is a great name! So what is mine?*

"Rainpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as..."

Chapter 14

"Rainfur! StarClan honors your honesty and your excellent hunting skills!" Frostsstar continued, fixing her gaze on Rainfur's. *Wow, I'm a warrior!*

Featherhawk and Rainfur exchanged an excited glance and rested one by one on their leaders shoulder, licked her shoulder respectfully, and stepped back.

"Featherhawk! Rainfur! Featherhawk! Rainfur!" The Clan cheered their names, Lightnose and Streamfur gave them a warm look, and chanted along with the Clan. Rainfur held her head high, relishing this moment. *I've dreamed of this for so long!* Happiness surged through Rainfur, she had more energy now, feeling like she could run through the forest.

"Rainfur, Featherhawk, remember you two need to sit vigil tonight. Tomorrow is the gathering too. You two should prepare for it." Rainfur's former mentor padded up to the new warriors and reminded them.

"We know," Featherhawk flicked her tail dismissively. *Yeah, we know!* Rainfur nodded to Frostsstar.

"Good." Frostsstar twitched her ears.

"I'm so happy we're warriors now!" Rainfur turned to look at Featherhawk.

"Yeah! Me too!" Her sister meowed, eyes shining.

"Rainfur! Rainfur!" Willowpaw pounded up to Rainfur. "You're a warrior!"

"I am now!" Rainfur purred. *And you're still an apprentice! I'm going to*

go find Bramblepaw and have a word with him about... us later. Rainfur thought, a little embarrassed.

"Which means..." Featherhawk continued mischievously, eyes glowing, "we get to order you around now!" She finished triumphantly.

"No way! You've only just been made a warrior!" Willowpaw protested.

"Yeah, but we still are!" Rainfur added. *And being a warrior is great! Except for the prophecy...*

"You're not ordering me around!" Willowpaw held her head high.

"Anyways, we ought to go now." Rainfur glanced at the sky, it was turning dusk, and she still wanted to meet Bramblepaw. *Just go! I need to talk to him!*

"Do we?" Featherhawk looked surprised at her sister. *Well, I do!* Rainfur wanted to yowl but kept it inside her.

"Or is it just an excuse for getting away to do something!" Willowpaw challenged Rainfur mischievously. *Oh Willowpaw, you're my best friend, but sometimes you're just such a fur ball! You know me too well.* Rainfur sighed.

"We're warriors now, remember? We can mostly do what we like." Rainfur finally told Willowpaw.

Willowpaw looked at Rainfur a little more, then turned away. "Fine."

"I'm going to take a nap." Rainfur's sister yawned, "it's been a long day."

"What? How could you even think of sleeping? Today is the best day of my life!" Rainfur stared at her sister in disbelief.

"Well, it is, but I'm tired." Her sister's eyes drooped. *I guess it's good for me, because I wouldn't want her to know where I'm going.*

"Okay then. But let's find you a net first!" Rainfur conceded, and padded into the warriors den. *I'm going to sleep here from now on!* Excitement pricked Rainfur.

"Do you see any spare nests?" Rainfur hissed to Featherhawk, raking her gaze into the den.

"Hey Rainfur and Featherhawk! Me and Mouseheart have made two spare nests for you two! Come here!" Honeyfur called from somewhere further in. *Oh!*

"Let's go." Rainfur nudged Featherhawk.

"Okay." Her sister nodded, dragging herself to the nest.

"Hi Rainfur! Excited to be warriors at last?" Mouseheart flicked his tail at Rainfur. *It's Mouseheart!* Rainfur padded to him.

"Hi! Yeah, it's *great* to be a warrior now! But I'd better go now." Rainfur glanced at the den entrance.

"Okay." Mouseheart nodded. "Bye!"

"Sleep well Feather*hawk*." Rainfur spoke her sister's new name for the first time.

"Thanks Rain*fur*." Featherhawk spoke her sister's name too.

"Bye!" Rainfur responded after a while, and padded out of the den. *Now it's just time to get Bramblepaw!*

***

"Bramblepaw! Over here!" Rainfur half called half whispered to Bramblepaw.

"Rainfur!" He turned around, and bounded to her side.

"Rainfur?" Willowpaw came out of the den, saw Bramblepaw and gave Rainfur a knowing glance. "Ah, I see, the excuse you made for *going* is to talk with Bramblepaw?" Willowpaw's eyes gleamed, "ooh, romantic!" She teased.

"Uh, what are you talking about? I-uh *totally* didn't do anything!" Rainfur stammered, trying to act normal. *I knew she would see me!*

"Hmmm, what about Bramblepaw then?" Willowpaw eyed her friend suspiciously. "Come on Rainfur, just admit it!"

"Admit what?" Rainfur was so worried Willowpaw would give her away. *I don't want Bramblepaw to know yet!*

Willowpaw beckoned Rainfur forward and whispered, "that you love him!" She stepped back.

"I mean, I do! But just-I was about to tell him secretly!" Rainfur was flustered.

"I knew it was an excuse! Ha! I won't ruin your meeting though...I would love you two to be mates! My best friend will be my kin!" Willowpaw flicked her tail, and Rainfur quickly hurried away. *I'd better get away, now!*

"Uh, well, I'll go now then, see you later!" Rainfur backed away.

"Let's talk." Rainfur hissed to Bramblepaw after she was far away from Willowpaw.

"What was that about?" Bramblepaw asked curiously.

"Oh uh, it was nothing." Rainfur muttered, feeling hot with embarrassment.

"Okay... what are we talking about anyways?" Bramblepaw asked hesitantly.

"Follow me," Rainfur led the way to a bramble thicket, and stopped.

"Anyways, er, I like your new name! It's awesome!" He stammered, looking at Rainfur awkwardly.

"Thanks Bramblepaw." Rainfur glanced back at him, looking awkward too. He was acting a little odd.

"Anyways." Rainfur paused, "I wanted to ask you..." Rainfur started,

this is impossible! How would he like me? "Do you...do you like me?" Rainfur swallowed.

"Er-uh-um," Bramblepaw stammered, looking as embarrassed as Rainfur felt. Rainfur wanted to take back the words.

"I-I don't like you." Bramblepaw lowered his gaze, looking embarrassed. Rainfur's heart sank, *Oh StarClan, I'm such a fish-brain! Of course he wouldn't like me!*

"Oh, never mind then." Rainfur mumbled.

"I meant, I love you!" Bramblepaw hurried, dismay showing through his gaze. *But... That's impossible!*

"Really?" Rainfur stared Bramblepaw.

"Yeah." Bramblepaw shuffled his paws awkwardly.

"I love you too!" Rainfur breathed, and they pressed their muzzle to each other's. *Today really is the best day of my life!* She relished the scent of him. Then, Rainfur suddenly remembered she had to prepare for the vigil tonight.

"Oh, I have to go now, let's talk next time." Rainfur looked into Bramblepaw's eyes, hoping he understood.

"Okay," he nodded, regret in his words, but understanding showed in his eyes.

"Bye then!" Rainfur called to him while running back to her den.

"Bye!" She heard a faint trace of Bramblepaw's voice. *I can't believe he loves me back!*

"Featherhawk! Wake up! It's almost time for our vigil!" Rainfur nudged Featherhawk softly, calling to her sister. *What a dormouse!* Rainfur wanted to purr.

"Wha? Rainfur! It's time *already*?" Featherhawk grumbled.

"Yes!" Rainfur exclaimed.

"Okay, wait for me!" Featherhawk called to Rainfur.

"Sure!" Rainfur answered back. *Of course I would! I' m so excited to be a real warrior tomorrow at last!*

Chapter 15

"Rainfur! Featherhawk! It is time for your vigil." Froststar nodded to them, flicking her tail. *We're going to be real warriors now!*

"Okay." Rainfur bounded up to the camp entrance, sitting still as Featherhawk sat beside her.

"Good thing we're not warriors in leafbare!" Featherhawk shivered in the night breeze.

"Well, it's not that cold!" Rainfur told her sister, though her body protested, her fur was trying its best to keep her warm, and Rainfur still shivered in the wind. *Featherhawk is right, it is cold tonight!*

"You two stay quiet, StarClan is watching." Froststar's eyes gleamed, and Rainfur glanced at Silverpelt. *Do they approve of me? I hope so.* Rainfur nodded.

"We know, we know." Featherhawk shifted slightly into a more comfortable position, and settled down.

"Okay then, see you two at dawn!" Froststar padded back to camp, with Rainfur watching her disappear into the tunnel. *This is going to be a long night.* Rainfur sighed, catching Featherhawk's eye.

Featherhawk opened her mouth, but Rainfur shot her a glare. *StarClan is watching! We have to be silent.* Rainfur willed her to understand, Featherhawk nodded, and sat still.

The night was cold, fortunately not leafbare cold. The ferns beside the camp entrance rustled, and the wind swirled around them. The starry sky seemed to weave around them through the chilly night, blessing them.

Rainfur shivered, twitching her ears for any sounds of danger. *StarClan is watching.* Froststar's words echoed in her mind again and again, reminding her to stay quiet. *I hope it's dawn soon! I can't wait*

to patrol and hunt! The sun was starting to rise, dawn was coming soon.

The sky radiated blue, the clouds from the night before slowly backing away. Rainfur and Featherhawk looked at it in awe, amazed by how pretty it was. *I never knew sunrises were so pretty!* Rainfur breathed.

They waited until Froststar padded up to them, " how are you two?"

"Not too good." Featherhawk shivered, "cold." *Not really.*

"It was okay. The sunrise was beautiful!" Rainfur's eyes glowed.

"You two in for hunting? Firefeather has started ordering patrols, you two may as well join in." Froststar suggested.

"Early hunting? I'd like that please!" Rainfur's ears twitched, she stretched, yawing, flexing her claws after the stiff night.

"I'd like to!" Featherhawk straightened up suddenly.

"Good," Froststar led them into camp. *I can't wait to go hunting!*

"Hi Willowpaw!" Rainfur greeted her best friend as she passed by.

"Hey Rainfur! How's it like after the vigil!" Willowpaw scampered up to meet her.

"It was really cold." Rainfur shivered, stifling a purr. "Where are you going?" Rainfur asked Willowpaw.

"Oh, I'm about to train with Firefeather when she's done organizing patrols. Or maybe I'll go on a patrol!" Willowpaw told Rainfur.

"I'm going on hunting patrol." Rainfur informed Willowpaw. *My first day as a real warrior!*

"Oh! I hope I'm with you!" Willowpaw dug her claws into the ground.

"Rainfur! Featherhawk! And let's see, Willowpaw!" Firefeather

called their names.

"Yay! I'm with you!" Willowpaw jumped excitedly.

"Come on!" Rainfur sped forward, skimming through the grass.

"You're on the hunting patrol with me, I will lead." Firefeather finished, beckoning to them with her tail.

"Okay!" Featherhawk bounded up to join the deputy.

Willowpaw followed behind her mentor, "let's split up, we'll find more prey that way. Then we'll wait for everyone to get back to camp." Firefeather suggested as they stopped.

"Okay!" Rainfur agreed, "I'll go to The Bird Tree to hunt!"

"I'll go to the Stream!" Featherhawk suggested.

"Good, and Willowpaw will come with me to The Leafbare Grounds to hunt." Firefeather nodded, approval shining in her gaze.

Rainfur and Featherhawk meowed a quick thanks and ran off into the direction of RiverClan.

"See you later sister!" Rainfur called.

"This is the best day of my life! See you!" Featherhawk yowled. *Phew! Thank StarClan you didn't scare all the prey away!* Rainfur glanced around, thankful and annoyed at her sister at the same time.

Rainfur stopped by The Bird Tree, sniffing the area for prey. *I smell squirrel!* Rainfur crouched down, following the scent trail of the squirrel.

Suddenly, a brown figure moved among the branches of the tree, making rustling noises. *Up there!* Rainfur looked up, the squirrel was happily nibbling on a nut, not noticing Rainfur.

Rainfur clawed on the tree trunk, getting hold of it steadily. And started to climb the tree, she held her breath, trying not to scare the

squirrel away with her scent. She wiggled her hind quarters, ready to pounce, and leapt for the squirrel. It turned around, gazing at Rainfur with a horrified expression. It tried to escape onto another branch, but was stopped by Rainfur. She pounced on it, biting hard into it. Fresh warm blood oozed out of the squirrel, and Rainfur licked her lips at the scent of fresh-kill blood.

She picked it up, and carried it back to camp. Featherhawk, Firefeather and Willowpaw were already waiting there, each with a juicy piece of prey, waiting patiently for Rainfur.

Her sister had a carp in her jaws, and Willowpaw had a thrush, and Firefeather had a big fat starling.

"Wow! Great catch!" Featherhawk was amazed by Rainfur's catch.

"Thanks, but it was nothing, really," Rainfur lowered her head, she didn't want any cat to think she was ambitious.

"You took your time!" Willowpaw rolled her eyes. *Well, you shouldn't be ordering a warrior around!* Rainfur wanted to tell Willowpaw, but Firefeather stepped ahead.

"Now Willowpaw, that's no way to talk to your Clanmate, and if I know you, you're best friend!" Firefeather scolded, "I expect you to do the elders ticks afterwards."

"What?" Willowpaw moaned. *I'm a warrior! So I don't need to do elders' ticks anymore!* Rainfur just realized. She had gotten used to doing the elders' ticks that she forgot. *Hooray!*

"You do as you're told." Firefeather turned around, and headed back into camp. Rainfur set her piece of prey on the fresh-kill pile immediately. *This squirrel sure is heavy!* Rainfur's jaws ached from carrying it and putting it on the fresh-kill pile.

"Rainfur! Featherhawk!" Froststar called to the two new warriors.

"Yes, Froststar?" Rainfur padded up to her former mentor as Featherhawk followed.

"What is it?" Featherhawk asked, turning to her leader. *I hope it's*

something good!

"How is it? To be a warrior now?" Froststar paused, then asked. *Why say so?* Rainfur was confused, but Featehrhawk replied excitedly.

"It's great! I love being a warrior!"

"That's good." Froststar nodded, and added, "I would like you to go to the gathering tonight. It'll be your first time as a warrior!"

"Oh! Thank you so much!" Rainfur's eyes lit up, and her sister straightened.

"You should go rest now, you have had a long night yesterday." Froststar sympathised.

"Okay." Rainfur thanked Froststar once again and padded into the warriors den. There were warriors sleeping, and one of them including her father, Streamfur, who was snoring gently.

Rainfur carefully squeezed through the warriors and to her nest Mouseheart and Honeyfur had saved them, and softened the moss. She circled the nest, trying to heat up the moss before getting in, and settled down.

"I'm not sleepy, so you can sleep, Rainfur." Featherhawk told her sister softly, murmuring into her ear. "Sleep well, sister."

"Thanks," Rainfur's eyelids fluttered, drifting into sleep. *Later, I'll be going to the gathering!*

Chapter 16

Chapter 16

Rainfur woke with a start, startled by the sound of Featherhawk. "Rainfur! Rainfur! Wake up!"

"Wh-wha-going on?" Rainfur's eyes blinked open, looking at her sister, the sun was blazing hot, warming Rainfur's fur. *As if it wasn't hot enough.* Rainfur grumbled.

"It's dawn already! Firefeather should be looking for us now!" Featherhawk replied, eyes widened.

"Oh! I forgot completely! We'd better go out now!" Rainfur jumped onto her paws immediately, surprised at how much she overslept. *I must have been so tired!* Rainfur was flustered, sat up,and started cleaning.

"I'll wait for you," Featherhawk, who was cleaned up already, curled her tail over her paws, and sat down.

"Thanks sister, I'm going to look the best I can!" Rainfur nuzzled her sister gently. She groomed herself till she thought she couldn't be more clean. *There! I think I'm good now.*

"Let's go and see what Firefeather has for us!" Rainfur nudged Featherhawk.

"Okay," Featherhawk scrambled to her paws, and followed Rainfur outside.

"Firefeather!" Rainfur sped up as soon as she saw the deputy. *I hope I didn't miss anything!*

"Rainfur! Featherhawk! Great! I was just about to organize the patrols." Firefeather called out to them.

"Okay!" Featherhawk replied, nodding. *Good thing I didn't miss anything!* Rainfur sighed, relieved that she wasn't in trouble as a warrior for the first day.

"Moonshadow, Shadeclaw, Leafshade, let's see, Bramblepaw! You'll go to patrol the ShadowClan border!" Firefeather called the cats who were named. *What patrol am I going on?* Rainfur was impatiently clawing at the ground, unlike her sister, who was chilling off, and patiently waiting for the deputy.

"Shadeclaw! You will lead the patrol." Firefeather finished.

"Of course." Shadeclaw dipped his head and collected his patrol and headed off.

Firefeather paused, thinking for a long time. "Cloudheart, Ashtail, and Amberpaw? Do you need anything?"

"Amberpaw, go see what we need!" Cloudheart whispered to the apprentices. Amberpaw dipped her head and slid into the den.

After a while, Amberpaw came out again, and reported, "we need catmint, poppy seeds, dock, tansy, borage if you can find them." Then she paused, *wow! So much is missing!* Rainfur was amazed and confused at how there were so few supplies at the same time, but showed no notice.

"We might also need marigold, but if you can't find that, try to find goldenrod." Cloudheart added hastily.

Firefeather nodded slightly, "okay, so Rainfur and Featherhawk, I would like you two to go with..." She trailed off. *Oh StarClan, tell me we're not herb gathering! But I'm a warrior, so maybe it's just backup, also, I hope Amberpaw comes!* "Which of you is free?"

"Amberpaw, do you think you can find the herbs with Rainfur and Featherhawk? Or do you need Ashtail?" Cloudheart asked the apprentice.

Her eyes opened wide, but was calm, "I think I can do it," *yes! I'm at least with Amberpaw!*

"Good, then Rainfur and Featherhawk, you two go with them to find the herbs they need please." Firefeather spoke, and Rainfur quickly followed Amberpaw.

"Where are we going?" Featherhawk asked, *I hope not far!* Rainfur was still a little tired from the vigil, although she slept for a long time.

"Oh, for catmint, we need to go to the Twolegplace, but the others will be near camp." Amberpaw replied, not looking back.

"How's it like to be a medicine cat apprentice?" Rainfur asked suddenly, *I wish I knew!*

"It's perfect! I learned how to treat cats, and now I can treat them like any medicine cat can!" Amberpaw boasted, eyes shining joyfully.

"Seems like you *like* being a medicine cat!" Featherhawk screwed up her nose. *I can't believe any cat who does! I mean, the herbs just are disgusting! Except for catmint!*

"Well, it was kind of hard at first, more... disgusting, but now it's great!" Amberpaw shot Featherhawk a glare, half amused, half indignant.

"Are we almost there yet?" Featherhawk sounded tired. *We've definitely been walking for a long time!* Rainfur nodded, agreeing.

"Almost!" Amberpaw ran forwards to the Twolegplace ahead. "Here somewhere." She scanned the area. *This looks hard to find.*

***

"We're back!" Rainfur called to the medicine cats through bundles of catmint, while Amberpaw was grabbing a bundle of herbs in a leaf in her jaws. Featherhawk was carrying a bundle of borage, and they were all full with supplies. *This could be useful for moons!* Rainfur felt pleased at how much they picked.

"Great job! All of you! You brought toms of everything!" Ashtail hurried out, praising them all.

"It was nothing, really." Rainfur dipped her head, laying the catmint down in front of them. *I really hope this is enough since in leafbare it's more likely to catch greencough or whitecough!*

"You did great!" Cloudheart followed Ashtail, and widened his eyes as he saw how much they brought back. Rainfur's mouth was still watering from carrying the catmint, and trying not to eat them on the way.

"We should go now, we need to prepare for the gathering!" Rainfur told the medicine cats.

"Ah yes! Of course, we need to prepare too! See you next time!" Cloudheart nodded, flicking her tail back and forth.

***

"RainClan! Come with me!" Froststar yowled, *the gathering! Now let's see. What RiverClan can say now!* Rainfur gathered around her leader, excited for the gathering.

Willowpaw catched up to Rainfur and asked, "what do you think RiverClan will say?"

"I don't know!" Rainfur's paws tingled.

***

"RainClan is finally here!" Birchstar called the RainClan cats scornfully. *Huh! Let's see what you're going to say about the battle?* Rainfur rolled her eyes.

"Okay, let's start." Runningstar jumped onto the great rock with a mighty leap, with the other leaders following behind.

"I will go first," Froststar padded forward, with a hard glare on the RiverClan leader. And began, "RiverClan has invaded us last time for The Stream." Froststar's mew sharpened. Her eyes cool.

"RiverClan has come to invade because it should be ours! RiverClan knows how to swim as well as RainClan!" Birchstar snapped. Her eyes dark.

"StarClan has given The Stream to ours, you have your own river." Froststar's tone was cool and frosty.

Birchstar was speechless for a second. *See? You don't know what to say anymore right?* Rainfur felt triumphant.

"RiverClan has no right to take what is ours!" Willowpaw was furious, just as Rainfur felt.

"Exactly!" Rainfur spat, glaring at the RiverClan leader. *She has no right!*

"RiverClan needs the prey!" Birchstar finally spoke, glaring at Froststar.

"Do you not think RainClan needs prey too?" Froststar growled.

"Stop!" Rosestar stopped the fighting cats. *We need prey just as Froststar said!*

The two leaders broke off, still growling. "Anyways, as I said, we have two new warriors!" Froststar finally announced after she calmed down. "Rainfur and Featherhawk!"

Rainfur held her head high as the Clans cheered their names. RiverClan was cheering more half-heartedly. *I'm a true warrior now!*

"I will speak now," Rosestar rose to her paws and stepped forward. Behind her, Birchstar and Froststar were glaring at each other, their muscles tensing. *What about ThunderClan now?* Rainfur wondered.

"ThunderClan has had good prey, and I have to warn the Clans that ThunderClan has scented a pack of dogs loose." Rosestar warned. *That could be dangerous!* Rainfur thought, worried.

"Thank you Rosestar," Runningstar nodded, stepping forward. "It is time for me to announce WindClan's improvement!" His eyes gleamed. *You bet the improvement's are better than ours!* Rainfur wanted to snort with amusement.

"WindClan has made some improvements in our camp, and has a new queen nursing!" Runningstar's eyes shined with pride. *Well WindClan does have some kits!* Rainfur purred.

The Clans gathered the night and continued to share their stories

and experiences. *RainClan will defeat RiverClan and scare them off for good!*

Chapter 17

"Willowpaw!" Rainfur hurried to her best friend's side, *did she pass her assessment?*

"What?" Willowpaw saw Rainfur and padded to her and touched noses.

"Did you pass?" Rainfur asked, excited for her friend. *I really hope so!*

"Yes! Firefeather said I passed! And so did Bramblepaw!" Willowpaw's eyes shone with pride, puffing out her chest. *Yes!*

"Great job! We can sleep together now!" Rainfur leaped into the air triumphantly. *And I'll be nearer to Bramblepaw! Is that a good thing?*

"Thanks," Willowpaw licked Rainfur.

"Your ceremony won't be long now!" Rainfur exchanged a glance with Froststar and she nodded.

"Yeah," Willowpaw nodded, Froststar gave a flick of a tail to show Rainfur the ceremony was now.

"It's now in fact." Rainfur added to Willowpaw, looking at Froststar. *I wonder what's her name!* Rainfur was so excited for her friend it felt like she was experiencing it herself.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Froststar yowled, her head raised. *Finally!* Rainfur bounded up to the Highrock.

Willowpaw's eyes widened as she searched for her brother, they padded forward, tail raised high. "Today, we will have two new warriors! Willowpaw and Bramblepaw have passed the warrior assessment and is ready to become warriors!" Froststar looked down at them.

"Willowpaw, Bramblepaw! Come forward!" Frostar beckoned to them. *It's time!* Rainfur's heart pounded excitedly.

"I, Frostar, leader of RainClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these apprentices. They have trained well to learn your noble code and is ready to become a warrior in their turn." Frostar stopped and looked at the two apprentices. *What will be her name?* Rainfur wondered.

Willowpaw and Bramblepaw took a step forward, looking nervous. *You can do it!*

"Willowpaw, Bramblepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to defend and protect your Clan, even at the cost of your life?" Frostar's eyes gleamed.

"I do," Willowpaw's voice quivered a little, but no doubt in her voice.

"I do," Bramblepaw was more confident, raising his head proudly. *He's going to make such a good warrior! And I'll be sleeping beside him!* Rainfur looked at Bramblepaw warmly.

"Then, by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names. Willowpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Willowheart! StarClan honors your intelligence and great hunting skills." Willowheart's eyes shone happily, and rested her muzzle onto Frostar's.

"Bramblepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Brambleheart!" Frostar continued, announcing. *Willowheart and Brambleheart are great names!* Rainfur looked at Brambleheart fondly, and he looked back, eyes warm.

"Willowheart! Brambleheart! Willowheart! Brambleheart!" The Clan called their names in pride. Rainfur chanted so loudly her throat was sore. *Willowheart! Brambleheart!*

"Rainfur!" Willowheart ran to her friend. "I'm a warrior just like you now!"

"I know! Your names are beautiful!" Rainfur complimented. *I love*

them!

"Thanks," Brambleheart put in, and Willowheart rolled her eyes.

"Thanks."

The Clan was about to go back into their dens when Firefeather suddenly called.

"I would like to say something!" Her eyes full of sorrow. *What now?* Rainfur wondered.

"What's happening?" Brambleheart whispered.

"No idea," Willowheart replied.

"Let's listen." Rainfur pricked her ears.

"What is it?" Froststar turned around and asked her deputy. *I wonder.*

Firefeather breathed in a deep breath, "I-I would like to retire to the elders den." *What?* Rainfur was shocked.

"But... why?" Froststar was puzzled and sorrowful, gazing at her deputy in confusion.

"I have been a warrior for long enough. I have trained a fine warrior, Willowheart, and I think I should retire. " Firefeather sighed, not meeting the leader's gaze. *She's not even that old!* Rainfur wanted to protest.

"What?" Willowheart stared at her former mentor in surprise.

"But... Firefeather, oh, my friend." Froststar continued. "You were a fine deputy, and you may go join the elders now." She choked out.

"Thank you Froststar." Firefeather dipped her head.

"May you be in peace now. You have served your Clan well." Froststar rested her tail onto Firefeather's shoulder. *She's really going to retire! Who's going to be our deputy now?*

"Why did she retire!" Brambleheart paced around, confused. *Don't ask me.* Rainfur sighed.

"I don't know, but I do wonder who the next deputy is!" Willowheart told Brambleheart. *Me too.*

"Frostar will announce it before Moonhigh." Rainfur flicked her ears.

"Yeah," Brambleheart agreed, grooming his fur.

"I'm going to sleep." Featherhawk's voice came from behind.

"Same," Rainfur yawned, following her sister, "see you two later!" She called.

Rainfur settled down into her nest, and sighed, *who's going to be the next deputy? Moonshadow? He's quite popular. Or Dawnheart? She was Frostar's old friend too, and her hunting and battle skills are great! Maybe Leafshade, no, he's too young.* And drifted into sleep.

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"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" The call woke Rainfur with a start. *The ceremony!* She sat up straight, nudging Featherhawk who was sound asleep. Willowheart and Brambleheart were already at the clearing, looking expectantly at Frostar.

"Wake up! It's the new deputies naming ceremony!" Rainfur nudged her sister.

"Oh! What did you say? The ceremony?" Featherhawk shot straight up as she heard the words ceremony. *Yes sister.* Rainfur sighed, feeling helpless.

"Great! Let's go then!" Featherhawk charged out of the den immediately, and Rainfur rolled her eyes. *A second ago, you were sound asleep, and now? You're bounding off to the clearing without me.* Rainfur followed her sister, and saw Frostar about to speak.

"I have chosen my new deputy." There was regret in her voice, but

certainty too. *Who?* Rainfur stared at Froststar.

"Dawnheart will be the new deputy of RainClan!" Froststar announced, Firefeather poked her head out of the elders den, her eyes hurt, but still glad she's an elder now. *Dawnheart! I knew it! She's such a good warrior.* Rainfur yowled appreciatively.

"Me?" Dawnheart's jaws gaped open in surprise.

"Yes, you." Froststar was amused, beckoning to her.

"Thank you," Rainfur heard her murmur, then added more loudly after touching noses with Froststar. "I promise I will serve my Clan well and protect it to the deepest of my heart!" She dipped her head low, thanking all the cats.

"Dawnheart! Dawnheart!" The Clan yowled happily, glad they have a new deputy now. *She'll make a good leader one day! Will I, too?*

Chapter 18

"Rainfur?" Willowheart nudged Rainfur, who was staring at a Twoleg chasing a dog in Twolegplace. *What are they doing?* Rainfur was always confused at how Twolegs behave.

"Yes?" Rainfur didn't look back, still stuck in her thoughts.

"I... I would like to see Firefeather, I want to know how she's doing." Willowheart's mew was sorrowful. *Of course!* Rainfur turned around immediately.

"I'll come too, I want to see how she's doing too." Rainfur promised. *She must miss Firefeather.*

"Thanks, let's go then." Willowheart sounded relieved, leading the way into the elders den.

"Firefeather?" Rainfur called into the den.

"Willowheart and Rainfur!" Firefeather poked out of the den, she looked older, more like an elder, but very energetic. *She looks well.* Rainfur was happy that the former deputy seemed to enjoy being an elder.

"Firefeather! I missed you!" Willowheart ran inside of the den, nuzzling her former mentor. Rainfur watched, not knowing what to say or do, but seeing the two cats reunite made Rainfur think. *I should really go visit my mother and father.* Rainfur sighed, feeling old in her bones. It felt like ages when she was a apprentice, and it had been a long time when Lightnose and Streamfur had spoke with Rainfur. *I miss them too.*

Willowheart and Firefeather shared tongues for a moment, then Willowheart stepped back. "We should go now, Dawnheart would be organizing patrol now."

Firefeather nodded, sadness glistening in her gaze. *She must be*

thinking how she had once been a deputy. Rainfur looked sympathetically at the Firefeather, speechless. "I understand." Firefeather finally replied.

"I'll get you some prey next time!" Willowheart promised as they left the den.

"You know?" Rainfur suddenly broke the silence, asking no one in particular. Willowheart stopped, turning to stare at her in confusion.

"What?" Willowheart asked.

"I ought to go see Lightnose and Streamfur." Rainfur replied, eyes glazed. *They must miss me, too. I'll get Featherhawk with me, and we'll go.*

"Oh," Willowheart didn't seem surprised, "of course."

"Should I go now?" Rainfur's eyes finally focused on her friend. *I don't think so, Dawnheart would be organizing patrols.*

"If you want, but I suggest no, we need to go on patrol soon." Willowheart shrugged.

"True." Rainfur agreed. "I'll go after some patrols."

"Good idea." Willowheart nodded, padding towards Dawnheart. *Later, I will go. But I have to focus on my Clan first.* Rainfur was determined to become the best warrior possible.

"Rainfur! Willowheart! There you are! I was waiting for you to come." Dawnheart's voice sounded near them, the ginger she-cat looked flustered. *It must be hard being deputy.* Rainfur was glad she wasn't. *But will I be?*

You will be the greatest, you will love a cat who you will need to ignore until you are. Don't let him disturb you!

The prophecy suddenly rang in her ears, repeating over and over again in Rainfur's mind. She shivered, feeling overwhelmed all over again like the day Cloudheart told her the prophecy.

"... and Rainfur! Rainfur you can lead the patrol to the RiverClan border." Dawnheart finished. *What?* Rainfur was suddenly felt dizzy, turning to look at Dawnheart, confused.

"You will lead the patrol to the RiverClan border with Lightnose, Goldenfeather, Nightfall and Dapplefur." Dawnheart repeated slowly but patiently. *I didn't even hear any of that!* Rainfur was surprised, *and I'm leading it!*

"Okay," Rainfur dipped her head, trying to concentrate without the prophecy disturbing her.

"Good," Dawnheart padded off.

"Come on, let's go." Rainfur called her patrol. *Lightnose is with me!*

"Here!" Lightnose called, stopping beside her daughter.

"Here." Goldenfeather stood beside Rainfur.

"I'm here!" Nightfall joined them.

"All good." Dapplefur scuffed the ground.

"Okay, let's go then." Rainfur was a little nervous. *RiverClan it is!* Rainfur padded slowly, checking behind her.

"Rainfur," Her mother's mew made Rainfur turn around.

"Yes?" Rainfur asked softly so no one would hear.

"You will be a great warrior Rainfur." Lightnose replied, focusing on not Rainfur, but nothing, her eyes were glazed, looking at nothing in particular. *Did Cloudheart tell her the prophecy too?* Rainfur froze suddenly, stopping as the warriors following her bumped into each other.

"What's happening? Why have we stopped?" Nightfall called at Rainfur, who was frozen in place.

"Oh-uh-nothing, let's keep going, I-uh was just smelling the air-uh for scents." Rainfur was snapped out of her thoughts right that

moment. Lightnose looked at her, worried. *She seems like she knows nothing, thank StarClan!* Rainfur sprinted forward, stopping at the border of RiverClan.

"Don't you pesky RainClan cats even dare set paw into our territory!" A RiverClan patrol stopped as they saw Rainfur and the others. Riverflow, the deputy's eyes narrowed, Sleekfur's pelt bushed up, bristling as he yowled. *We didn't!* Rainfur wanted to claw his fur off for being so rude, but kept herself from starting a fight. *Calm down.* Rainfur told herself, breathing through rapid breaths.

Rainfur could see her patrol bristling with rage, sliding out their claws. Lightnose was staring angrily at the RiverClan cats, eyes widening.

"We didn't cross your border." Rainfur pointed out after she had calmed herself.

"Just stay where you are." Reedfur muttered, her eyes gleaming.

"Amd don't you dare cross The Stream! It's ours though we didn't win it last time!" Riverflow yowled. *Oh really? I thought you called the retreat?* Rainfur almost purred in amusement.

"It's ours." Rainfur's eyes narrowed.

"It isn't yours and won't be yours ever!" Rocksplash flicked his tail angrily swooping it on the smooth rocks. *I don't think so.* Rainfur dug her claws hard into the muddy ground.

"Sleekfur! Go back to the RiverClan camp to get more warriors! Now! We are going to get The Stream back!" Riverflow ordered, crouching down into battle stances. *If you're going to fight, we are!*

"Dapplefur! Go to RainClan and get help quick! Be as fast as you can!" Rainfur yowled to Dapplefur, and ran forwards to face the RiverClan deputy once more. *I'm going to claw of your confident face!*

The deputy looked a little nervous, remembering the time Rainfur and Willowheart had defeated him, but he braced himself for Rainfur's attack.

"RainClan attack!" Rainfur yowled, charging forwards.

Chapter 19

Rainfur charged ahead with Lightnose hard on her paws, Rainfur leaped on Riverflow, bunching her muscles. Riverflow's eyes narrowed, unsheathing his claws, meeting Rainfur's attack. Rainfur twisted as Riverflow clawed at her, missing exactly as Rainfur ducked under his belly and gave it a few good swipes.

He yowled in pain and rolled on the ground wrestling with Rainfur, pushing and pulling. *He's getting tired! Which means he's not going to be able to fight off more of my attack!* Rainfur felt relieved as she saw Riverflow pant and slow down, taking the moment to pounce on him. Rainfur dug her claws into his fur, blood oozed out of the wound as Riverflow yowled in pain.

At that, RiverClan cats charged ahead, battling the outnumbered patrol. One of the warriors pounced on Rainfur when she wasn't watching, and another clawed on her back. Rainfur was muffled by the fur on the cats on her back and couldn't kick out her hind legs or perform any battle moves. *I really hope the RainClan cats come soon!* Rainfur wished so hard she thought her mind would burst.

The only thing Rainfur could do right now was try to defend herself, holding off the warriors around her when suddenly RainClan cats started swarming over the rocks on RainClan's side of territory. *The RainClan cats are here!* Relief flooded in Rainfur's eyes as she saw the cats.

Almost at once, the weight on her back lightened, and Rainfur saw her mother, Lightnose, holding them off, giving them a hard cuff over their ears as Rainfur gave a hard nip under their underbellies. With a painful yowl, they backed off and fled. Rainfur and her mother exchanged a nod of acknowledgement and headed into different directions. *Who's in danger now?* Rainfur scanned the rocks for any sign of her Clanmates.

Dawnheart was fighting a huge tabby tom and was surrounded by a brown she-cat with white splotches which Rainfur thought was

Furzewing. Beside her, Willowheart was kicking out her hind paws and knocking the warrior to one side, panting. *I have to go help Dawnheart. Willowheart can wait, it seems like Dawnheart needs more help!* Rainfur started to run, her paws barely touching the ground as she sped ahead, charging for the tabby warrior.

Rainfur barreled into the tom and clawed furiously at his pelt. He arched his b ack in a snarl as he found he was trapped between the two warriors. *Got you now!* Rainfur wanted to smirk, but just as she was about to do so, Furzewing slammed into her, knocking the breath out of Rainfur. *Fox-dung! I forgot she was there!* Rainfur hissed under her breath and straightened up, just then, Furzewing gave a second attack. Leaping forward with her back arched, twisting in mid-air. Rainfur was almost caught by the attack, but she dodged nimbly, and heard the thump of the she-cat's fall.

Rainfur took the advantage and leaped onto Furzewing, giving her neck fur a bite, and she flung Rainfur back, yowling angrily as she clawed at Rainfur's tail, digging her claws in. Rainfur tried to shake her off, but it was making it worse. Her tail stung like fury as Furzewing fastened her teeth into Rainfur's tail. *I need to get her off!* Rainfur panicked, gritting her teeth, she turned around as quickly as possible and gave Furzewing a claw on her eye. She immediately let go of Rainfur as she rolled away, her eyes dropping with blood, she fled.

Rainfur turned to see the tom, fleeing into the distance and Dawnheart gave Rainfur an approving nod, and headed off. Rainfur ran ahead to see Brambleheart, squashed by two toms who were fighting side by side, each leaving a mark on Brambleheart's sides. Rainfur gasped, hurrying toward him. *I'm coming Brambleheart!*

Rainfur crouched down, determined not to make a sound, she pounced onto the two tom's back, shredding their pelts, clawing them away from Brambleheart.

"Together Brackenfall!" The brown tom with amber eyes yelled to his companion, trying to slash at Rainfur's belly. They pounced onto Rainfur in a sudden, for a moment, Rainfur froze, *what do I do?* In a heartbeat, the two toms would get to her, and she was outnumbered. But Brambleheart was in front of her in a heartbeat,

defending her. *No! Don't waste your life on mine!* Rainfur flung herself at the toms, slashing savagely at their belly, nipping and clawing as Brambleheart bit into their fur. Finally, they drove them away, panting hard as they searched for breath.

"W-we-make-a great team." Rainfur beamed through tight breaths. *We are perfect.*

"Yes." Brambleheart nuzzled her gently, affection showing through his gaze.

Rainfur and Brambleheart locked gazes for a heartbeat, then padded away slowly, longing in their eyes. Rainfur couldn't bear it anymore and fled to the other side. She saw Froststar wrestling with two toms and a she-cat. Clawheart, Shrewhawk, and Morningfall. *No! I have to help her!* Rainfur quickened her pace, on the way, she was pricked on thorns, but she felt no pain. *My leader is going to bleed to death! And I won't be there in time!* Rainfur knew Clan cats wouldn't kill, but for some reason, a nagging pain filled herself with sorrow that her leader was about to die. *I know it, she's going to die...*

Rainfur hurled herself at the nearest warrior that was attacking Froststar, in the middle, Froststar was trapped, frantically clawing her way out, but the warriors just bit her flank and kept her in. *She's like prey that's being tortured!* Rainfur's eyes widened in horror as she saw the tricks the RiverClan cats were pulling on their leader.

"Froststar!" Rainfur shouted, giving a signal to Froststar. *I'm coming, but I know it's no use... oh StarClan, is this her destiny? Don't take her away, please!* Rainfur clawed at the cats, and kicked out her hind legs, tripping two of them. Clawheart growled, getting up to his paws as he fought with Rainfur. *He's tired, but so am I, will I win this fight? We're outnumbered!* Rainfur observed, slashing at the sleek black tom.

Her enemies' weight loosened as she found that Willowheart was beside her. "I'm here to help!" She panted, clawing at the warriors. Clawheart yelped as he saw Willowheart and fled as she bit hard into his scruff and flung him away.

Rainfur nodded, and turned to face Morningfall, twisting and

turning. Willowheart was beside her, clawing at her nose. At last, Morningfall fled, giving one last snarl at them, but could do nothing since she was so tired.

Shrewhawk's eyes widened as he saw his companions fleeing back to their camp and shrunk. He straightened up a little, and growled. *We're going to get you now!* Rainfur was more confident, *I'm fighting for my leader you know!* She and Willowheart clawed and slashed at him in rhythm, driving him off in no time.

Froststar! Rainfur hurried to see her leader, who was curled up in a ball, blood oozing out from every wound.

"No!" Willowheart seemed like she had just found out her leader was there all along.

"Rainfur," Froststar rasped, her eyes fixed on Rainfur's.

"Yes Froststar?" Rainfur put her muzzle closer so she could hear.

"Go tell Dawnheart, tell her that, I'm in StarClan." Froststar's mew was barely audible.

"No! You won't die! I'm going to take you back to camp, now!" Rainfur was frantic now, trying to lift her leader. Willowheart sat aside, her eyes filling with sadness.

"No Rainfur, it is my time, StarClan is here to welcome me now, go tell Dawnheart now." Froststar looked straight into her eyes as the silence dragged on. *No... No! This can't be happening!* Rainfur stared at her leader in horror.

"I will," she choked out. Willowheart's eyes watered, and Rainfur too, blinked her eyes rapidly, trying not to show weakness in front of her leader.

"Good," Froststar's eyes flickered, and her eyes turned black, the light out of her eyes.

"No!" Rainfur wailed. *No! No! No!*

Willowheart looked at Rainfur, and her gaze met hers.

"Froststar, she's dead, isn't she?" Willowheart choked out, and Rainfur knew Willowheart already knew the truth.

"Yes." Rainfur replied anyways, still in shock. *We won, but now Froststar is dead, how will life go on now? We'll have a new leader, yes, but it won't be the same!*

Chapter 20

"Dawnheart?" Rainfur asked softly as Willowheart dragged Froststar's body. *So much pain.* Rainfur blinked as water came rushing out of her eyes, trying to stop it.

"Yes?" Dawnheart turned around, surprised to see Rainfur so solemn. Rainfur opened her jaw to reply, but choked on the words. *I can't!* Panic flared through Rainfur as she struggled to tell the deputy what had happened.

Just then, Dawnheart's face darkened, she stood up slowly, and started to panic. "Froststar, where is she!"

"She's dead." Rainfur finally choked out. Bowing down solemnly.

"No! I can't lead the Clan yet! I-I can't..." Dawnheart trailed off, her tail drooping. "I'm so inexperienced!" she finally blurted.

"You'll be okay." Rainfur assured, resting her tail onto the deputy's. *It's so weird how I'm reassuring a warrior older than me!* Rainfur felt awkward.

"Thanks." Dawnheart murmured, while Willowheart padded up to them and rested the body of Froststar.

"We should bring her to camp." Willow heart suggested, turning away as tears rushed into her eyes.

"Of course." Rainfur nodded, dragging the body back to camp.

"No, I'll carry her." Dawnheart shoved her way forward. Rainfur nodded, understanding the deputy's feeling, she let her pass, trailing behind to let Willowheart go. *The cats in the camp don't even know what's happening, they'd still be celebrating the success of the fight.* Rainfur sighed, suddenly sorry for the cats at camp, feeling the sorrow they would feel when they found out their leader was dead.

The three cats walked in silence, mourning their former leader on

the way.

"Rainfur? What's wrong?" Brambleheart nuzzled Rainfur as they walked into the camp.

"Froststar is dead." Rainfur replied, feeling numb. *How can I describe what happened?* Rainfur nosed her way inside.

"No!" Brambleheart shook his head, confused, "how can that be?"

"She bled to death." Rainfur finally replied. She didn't want Brambleheart to think the RiverClan cats killed her or broke the warrior code.

"But..." Brambleheart trailed off, burying his muzzle into hers.

"Let's go, we should start buying her now." Rainfur nosed him. *And Dawnheart would be Dawnstar soon.*

"Okay." Brambleheart's low tone meant that he was mourning too. Affectionately, Rainfur nuzzled him, comforting him through licks.

***

"Dawnstar! Dawnstar!" The Clan cheered the new leader's name. Dawnstar had just come back from the journey to the Moonpool and was looking stronger. *She's going to be a great leader.* Rainfur cheered along.

Shadowkit and Applekit poked out of the nursery, they had just opened their eyes and everyone loved them. They were so cute and begging all the time, which made cats hard to scold them.

"What's happening?" Applekit squeaked, and Rainfur felt like her heart would break. *When they were born, they didn't even have a leader!*

"Dawnstar is back and received her nine lives and her name." Applekit and Shadowkit's mother, Dapplefur, told them, her eyes still sorrowful.

"Then why are you sad?" Shadowkit asked, wondering.

"Because Froststar is dead." Dapplefur murmured, not meeting their gaze. Their father, Shadeclaw, padded up to them.

"Come on kits, let's go see Dawnstar."

"Okay!" Applekit and Shadowkit scurried to their father.

"Dawnstar still has to choose a deputy." Rainfur heard Stonefur murmur to Goldenfeather.

"Yes." She replied thoughtfully. *I wonder who she's going to choose!* Rainfur felt excited.

"Rainfur!" Featherhawk bounded towards her.

"What?" Rainfur turned around, snapping out of her thoughts.

"Dawnstar wants you." her sister replied.

"Okay." Rainfur started towards Dawnstar's new den.

"Dawnstar? You wanted me?" Rainfur asked through the tunnel.

"Yes, come in." Her leader's voice rang from the inside. Rainfur stepped in slowly, coming to meet Dawnstar.

"Rainfur, I would've chosen you to be my deputy, but alas, I couldn't do that. You still haven't trained an apprentice." Dawnstar finally spoke.

"What? Why?" Rainfur was taken aback.

"You are a strong warrior, and would lead your Clan well," She sighed, then continued, "I would like you to mentor one of Dapplefur's kits as soon as they're ready."

"Thank you!" Rainfur couldn't help but give a little bounce of excitement, and dipped her head respectfully.

"Good, we should start preparing for the vigil." Dawnstar flicked her tail, dismissing Rainfur.

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"Who do you think she'll choose?" Featherhawk asked Rainfur.

"I don't know, I guess we'll find out soon." Rainfur glanced at the sky, it was almost Moonhigh, and Dawnstar would have to choose a new deputy. *I wonder.*
"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Dawnstar assembled her Clan for the first time, looking a little nervous.

"It's time!" Featherhawk hurried to join the gathered Clan as Shadowkit and Applekit ran forward.

Rainfur heard Dapplefur sigh, but let her kits go. *They shouldn't be out here, should they?* Rainfur purred softly, knowing the truth, but didn't mind.

"I have to appoint a new deputy now, and I hope StarClan is watching." Dawnstar breathed in a deep breath, obviously focusing. *Who is she going to choose?* Rainfur scuffled the ground impatiently.

"I say these words before StarClan, so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors may hear and approve my choice." She paused, eyes glittering. "The new deputy of RainClan will be Dewpelt!" Dawnstar's eyes brightened as she spoke the last words.

"Dewpelt! Dewpelt!" The Clan sang the deputies name. *He's a great warrior! Dawnstar made a great choice.* Rainfur agreed inwardly, looking at Dawnstar, and she looked back, her eyes unblinking and her face expressionless.

***

"I can't wait to know Amberpaw's new name!" Willowheart exclaimed, looking up to see the half moon in the dark sky.

"Me too!" Rainfur agreed, nodding. Amberpaw, Cloudheart and Ashtail had left for the half moon meeting for medicine cats, and would soon be back.

"What do you think? Amberheart? Ooh, that's a good name. Or maybe Amberpelt! Hmm, maybe Amberflight." Willowheart chattered on as Rainfur stared at the camp entrance, waiting for the

medicine cats to come back.

It felt like moons when Rainfur and the other cats finally saw Cloudheart and Ashtail, leading the way back to camp with Amberpaw behind her. *They're back!*

"We're here! And Amberpaw is now Amberfur!" Cloudheart announced as Ashtail nodded. Amberfur walked beside her fellow medicine cats, eyes shining, pleased. *That's a great name!* Rainfur blinked at her friend happily, glad she was finally a full medicine cat.

"Amberfur! Amberfur!" Willowheart yowled, affection showing in her eyes.

We have had hard times, but now we have a new leader, a new deputy, and a new medicine cat! Everything will be normal again.

Chapter 21

Rainfur sat outside of the warriors den as Dewpelt, the new deputy, organized the patrols for the day. She blinked, a little tired as she stared out into the endless forest. *I wonder what StarClan has for me now?* Rainfur suddenly wondered, itching to find the answers to the prophecy Cloudheart had told her when she was still a young apprentice. *Does StarClan still mean that? It's been such a long time.* Rainfur sighed, her heart hollow.

"Rainfur? What's bothering you?" Brambleheart had been so close to Rainfur these days Rainfur thought she would have kits soon.

"Nothing," Rainfur turned around, not meeting his gaze because Brambleheart knew her too well. Rainfur heard Brambleheart flick his tail frustratedly, sweeping up the leaves on the ground.

"I know you Rainfur, you're not like this usually." Rainfur looked back at him and saw Brambleheart narrow his eyes. *I know, but I can't tell him the prophecy! It's too complicated.* Rainfur swallowed. "So?" Brambleheart asked promptly. *I have to make up an excuse quickly!*

"Dawnstar told me a few moons ago that I would train one of Dapplefur's kits and they're six moons old now and I'm just nervous!" Rainfur rushed in a breath, at least part of it was true. She forced her eyes to brighten, but her gaze was still thoughtful.

"I see," Brambleheart didn't seem suspicious at all, just brushed his muzzle on Rainfur's. "You'll be a great mentor!"

"Thanks," Rainfur purred, feeling the thought slip away into nothing. *I would love to be with him.* Rainfur nuzzled him, purring, drinking in his scent.

Just then, a loud yowl broke their happiness. *What?* Rainfur tucked away from Brambleheart, looking up to see Dawnstar standing on the Highrock, calling for a meeting. *The ceremony!* Rainfur realised,

excitement flowing through her from ears to tail tip. *I'm going to be a mentor!*

Brambleheart was also staring up, then realisation showed in his eyes and he nodded at Rainfur, looking pleased. *If he's happy for me, then I'll be happy too.* Rainfur blinked affectionately at him.

"Today! Applekit and Shadowkit are ready to become apprentices! Come forward little ones." Dawnstar's eyes glittered.

Applekit and Shadowkit squealed happily, bounding forward, then realised their leader was watching and slapped their tails on their mouths. *They're so cute!* Rainfur purred. Dapplefur looked flustered, but stayed her ground and looked at kits lovingly, her flank touching Shadeclaw, her mate.

"Applekit!" Dawnstar turned sharply to face the tortoiseshell she-kit and meowed, "from this moment on till you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Applepaw!" She paused as Applepaw bounced up, giving an excited yowl, then stopped, looking embarrassed.

Dawnstar turned to Rainfur's, eyes locked with hers. *She's going to be my apprentice and I know it!* Rainfur felt excited as well, almost giving a yowl of triumph right then, but controlled herself. "Applepaw, your mentor will be Rainfur! Rainfur, you are a great warrior, and you have great hunting and battle skills and you are always determined and intelligent." Dawnstar ended, and did the same to Shadowkit, but Rainfur wasn't listening, *I'm a mentor!* Was the only thing she could think of. *I'm finally a mentor!*

Shadowkit was Shadowpaw now, and his mentor was Rainfur's sister, Featherhawk, and Dawnstar had told her that it was good if two littermates would train the other two, and Rainfur had nodded, not surprised.

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"We should take Applepaw and Shadowpaw for a tour right now, they'll be so excited!" Rainfur suggested to Featherhawk, *and I'm already excited! Being a mentor will be great!*

"Of course!" By the look of it, her sister was enjoying being a mentor too. Her eyes were glazed and Rainfur wondered if her sister was thinking the exact thing she was, *I have so many things planned for my apprentice!*

"Applepaw!" Rainfur called to her apprentice, who was grooming her fur, getting ready. *I can't wait! I promise I'll be the best mentor I can!* Applepaw jumped at the sound of her voice, then calmed down when she saw it was just her mentor, and padded towards her.

"Are we going now?" Applepaw asked excitedly, looking at Rainfur expectantly, and straightened up.

Rainfur nodded, and Applepaw gave a little excited bounce, "yes!"

"Follow me then, and *don't go without me* and *stay where I can see you* okay?" Rainfur looked at her apprentice sternly, wanting to purr as she thought of how stern she was being. *I'm getting old.*

Applepaw scuffed the ground, "fine," she finally nodded reluctantly. *She doesn't really mean it though, because I know how exciting it was on my first day. Which means I have to keep an eye on her.* Rainfur's eyes sparked.

Rainfur just nodded, and padded for the entrance, waiting for the apprentice to catch up. Then, they walked to The Stream, Rainfur was dreamy, *we won the battle here, and Froststar died trying to.* A pain stabbed Rainfur's heart, the thought that her former leader and mentor was dead reminded Rainfur of so many memories. *We were so young then...* Rainfur sighed, feeling nostalgic.

"Rainfur? What's wrong?" Applepaw looked worried, sniffing the air urgently as if something was wrong, *I was so caught up in my thoughts! Oh StarClan, how am I going to be a good mentor if I can't even focus!* Rainfur took a step back, head spinning in dismay.

"Nothing to worry about, I was just scenting for some prey." Rainfur lied, *you mouse-brain! Lying to your apprentice on the first day already!* Rainfur scolded herself.

"Okay," Applepaw was reassured by her mentor's soft mew, but

Rainfur felt guilty that she had lied.

"Let's keep going." Rainfur continued, starting to introduce The Stream. "Here is The Stream, one of the most important places in our territory." Rainfur almost winced in sorrow as she spoke her dead mentor's words.

"Can I go fish in it? I can swim! I promise!" Applepaw didn't even question about The Stream or Rainfur, but was bouncing around in excitement, waiting to jump inside already. *How do apprentices have so much energy.* Rainfur was amused by the thought, and concentrated.

"No Applepaw, you still don't know how to swim, though you will fish in it someday and we will learn to swim here soon." Rainfur told Applepaw.

"Okay." Applepaw looked crestfallen but was still excited. *Apprentices these days.* Rainfur sighed, shaking her head.

"So, any questions?" Rainfur asked, when Applepaw was about to answer, her sister, Featherhawk, with Shadowpaw behind her, came to join them.

"Hey!" Featherhawk bounded forward and waited for her apprentice. Applepaw raced to meet his brother as he joined, nuzzling him and purring, Shadowpaw too, was purring.

"Hello Featherhawk, I have just shown Applepaw The Stream, you?" Rainfur asked formally, sounding like a senior warrior. *I can't wait to mentor Applepaw and Shadow with my sister!* Rainfur wondered suddenly how her sister was going, she was always so happy and she loved messing around when they were apprentices.

"Oh, I've just taken Shadowpaw to The Leafbare Tree, then we met you. I was going to Shadowpaw The Stream next." Featherhawk replied.

"Okay, I think we should go together, Applepaw and Shadowpaw must want to be together." Rainfur suggested. *At least, it would be better and not that boring to them if I was an apprentice.*

"Yes!" Shadowpaw gave a bounce, and Featherhawk nodded approvingly.

"Sure!" Featherhawk replied.

Rainfur nodded and flicked her tail to motion the apprentices to join her, and they padded off into the forest.

Shadowpaw looked around incredulously as Applepaw walked beside him. The air was fresh, filled with RainClan scents, but there was something else to it. *What? I thought we wouldn't have any trouble with those anymore...*

Chapter 22

"Dawnstar! Dawnstar!" Rainfur hurried towards the leaders den, panting. "They're here again!" *Again.* Rainfur sighed. *I really don't want to put up with them, again.*

"Who? Where? Show me! Quick!" Dawnstar's panicked mew came as she shot out of her den.

"RiverClan." Rainfur heaved out the word with a massive effort. *Again.* The word kept looping inside her mind.

"Dewpelt! Battle patrol! Now! I'll go as well, we need the Stream. It's ours!" Dawnstar ordered, as several cats yowled in rage towards RiverClan. *A battle we're going to win.* Rainfur promised herself, *Brambleheart!* Rainfur suddenly realized, *I should go warn him right away!* Rainfur ran into the warriors den, her paws feeling heavy. *Why am I so tired and frustrated today?*

"Brambleheart?" Rainfur called, her claws tapping impatiently on the ground.

"Yes?" Brambleheart poked his head out, "what is it?"

"RiverClan!"Rainfur blurted.

"What?" Brambleheart looked taken aback by the sudden realization of attack, then looked more serious, "have I been called?" He asked Rainfur. *He's so sensible.* Rainfur stared at him dreamily. *What am I thinking? What's wrong with me?*

"Rainfur?" Brambleheart looked at Rainfur anxiously.

"Oh! Uh, no, I don't think so." Rainfur rushed out the words.

"Okay." Brambleheart's tail twitched to and fro. Then, he turned around and stared at my belly.

"What?" Rainfur asked, concerned. *Do I have something on my belly?*

She shook her head, clearing her thoughts. *No way! I must be fish-brained to think that.*

"Have you been taking extra prey from the fresh-kill pile these days? You're looking plump Rainfur." Brambleheart joked, but looked awkward as he spoke. *What?* Rainfur stared at him, her jaws gaped open in surprise.

"Wha-what?" She took a step back, even though Rainfur knew he was joking, pain stabbed her heart. *Have I really been taking more prey? I hope not! Wait...* Rainfur's mind whirled in confusion.

"Rainfur! I was just joking, you know, but you really do look a little more plump." Brambleheart soothed her, seeing the hurt look on her face.

"I don-I really-I don't think-am I-really more plump?" Rainfur forced the words out, gritting her teeth. *But I can't have become more... fat! Unless...* Rainfur shook her head, confusion welling up inside her again.

"Only a little." Brambleheart told her. *A little? What? But I... I can't have... have... but there is no way!* Rainfur started to panic, pacing around.

"Okay, let's go see if the battle patrol is back then!" Rainfur tried to keep her voice calm, changing the subject quickly, and turned and ran to the direction of the camp entrance. *So how are they doing, I didn't make that excuse for nothing.* Rainfur sighed, glancing over the bushes.

"Rainfur! Wait!" Brambleheart's voice sounded behind her. She turned around and saw Brambleheart panting, trying to catch up.

"Well, go faster furball!" Rainfur purred, looking jokingly at him. *A good furball though!* Rainfur thought, smirking.

"Well, who told you to be such a quick one!" Brambleheart shot back, looking at Rainfur innocently after doing that.

"You're such a daft furball!" Rainfur batted at him with her fore paws, feeling like kits again. *It feels so good to be with Brambleheart*

which means... Am I... Wait what am I thinking exactly... I shouldn't... The words in her mind was stuck in her mind, she couldn't think of it, *I can't, I mustn't! I have to be... Deputy. Or do I?* Rainfur suddenly remembered the prophecy.

You will be the greatest, you will love a cat who you will need to ignore until you are. Don't let him disturb you! The prophecy rang once again in her ears, making Rainfur's ear hurt, and her mind was twirling again, feeling dizzy.

"Rainfur!" A heartbeat later, Brambleheart was there, over her body, *what? I didn't realize I fell! How embarrassing! I don't usually fall!* Rainfur's cheeks turned hot as she stood up as soon as she could, wobbling.

"Stop! You just fainted!" Brambleheart's concerned mew forestalled her. *What? But I didn't!* Rainfur wanted to protest at him, but his warning gaze stopped her.

Rainfur sighed, feeling tired but restless as well, "okay." She closed her eyes.

"Amberfur! Cloudheart! Come...fainted... she's tired... quick!" Brambleheart's voice seemed to have come from far away, *but why? He's right beside me!* Rainfur was confused and worried, *will I still become a warrior anymore now? Or even deputy?* Rainfur shook her head to herself, *oh for StarClan's sake I'm getting too ambitious, I have to stop thinking like that.* Rainfur scolded herself.

Before Rainfur could stop thinking, paws began to work on her, she opened her eyes to see Amberfur checking over Rainfur, she looked concerned, but stayed calm as she asked, "does anywhere hurt badly particularly?"

"No, just my... my belly." Rainfur winced as a pain rippled through her belly. *Why? But why?* Rainfur wondered so badly.

"I'll check on you, don't worry." Amberfur reassured her. *Okay I guess, I think I need some sleep anyways.* Rainfur grunted, looking at her friend as she left the den, "Brambleheart! I want you to stay with Rainfur, or go get some prey and moss for her! She might need

it!"

"Okay I will!" Brambleheart replied, Rainfur heard him scurrying off into the distance. She sighed, feeling hopeless of sleep, but still flipped over and curled up, resting her muzzle on the soft moss, trying to fall asleep. *Oh StarClan I hope I do!* Rainfur prayed,

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"Rainfur! Wake up! I've got you prey and moss!" A paw shook Rainfur's side, waking her up instantly.

"What is it? Is there an attack?" Rainfur shot up, her fur bushing up, then realized it was only her mate, Brambleheart in front of her, and sighed in relief.

"No, it's just me." Brambleheart looked amused, starting to lick Rainfur's fur. *It feels so good to be treated like this...* Rainfur closed her eyes again, relishing the soothing licks of her mate.

"Here, eat some prey." Brambleheart nudged Rainfur, pushing a thrush beneath her paws.

Rainfur didn't need telling, she munched into the thrush, crunching through the bones and finished it, her belly feeling satisfied at last.

These few days, Rainfur had been hungry all the time for no reason, she was always hungry and every time she patrolled, she was tired. *Why? Oh StarClan tell me what's wrong!* Rainfur begged silently.

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"Rainfur! Amberfur's back!" Brambleheart whispered to Rainfur. *I knew that.* Rainfur shot him a look. He nodded, and backed away.

"Hold on there, I'm going to check on you." Amberfur's soothing voice calmed Rainfur. She shifted a little, feeling nervous. *What's wrong with me?* She wanted to scream.

"Amberfur? What's wrong with me?" Rainfur finally asked. Amberfur didn't reply, but kept on checking.

After a while, Amberfur called Rainfur's name, "Rainfur! Rainfur!" Her eyes were unusually serious, though her voice was fine. Rainfur was worried, *did I catch a sickness? Oh StarClan no!* Rainfur panicked.

But behind the seriousness of Amberfur's gaze, there was excitement and happiness, Rainfur was relieved to see that, and asked, "What is it?"

"Oh Rainfur, you..."

Chapter 23

"... are going to have kits!" Amberfur's eyes gleamed with pride as she looked at her old friend.

"But... what about Applepaw!" Rainfur froze as she finally remembered she had the apprentice to train. *And something else important, I can't have kits! I mean, I can, but it's not the way it's supposed to be!*

"Rainfur? I thought you'd be pleased! You don't need to worry about Applepaw! Dawnstar will sort that out." Amberfur looked worried.

"Oh, I am pleased! Really!" Rainfur lied, *the prophecy.* She sighed. The old prophecy finally made sense to her now, she was told not to be distracted by one I will love. It was obvious now, it was Brambleheart. Now I would have kits and I couldn't be a deputy anymore. *I'll have to give up on my kits until I become leader.* I decided, a painful stab in my heart.

"Well, you certainly don't look like it." Amberfur looked at me strangely.

Rainfur forced out a purr, but the rumble stuck in her throat. Amberfur looked at her, worried and concerned.

"Well, you'd better get some rest! I'll tell Brambleheart!" Amberfur stopped, "and Applepaw." She ended.

"Thanks." Rainfur replied, not looking at Amberfur.

"Bye then! See you soon!" She turned and left Rainfur lying in the den.

"Bye." She gave a half-hearted goodbye and shifted. *Oh StarClan, I wish I knew what to do!*

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"Rainfur! Come in!" Dawnstar called from inside, and Rainfur stepped into the den.

"What is it that you wanted to tell me?" She asked politely.

"It's about Applepaw." Dawnstar's eyes glowed, not giving anything away.

"What about her?" Rainfur asked curiously.

"She needs you as a mentor, and I want you as my deputy." Dawnstar sighed.

"But I didn't train an apprentice yet!" Rainfur exclaimed. *As much as I want to, at least.*

"That's exactly the point! If you train Applepaw, then I can make you deputy, which, of course, is what I want." Dawnstar continued.

"Oh, but I'm going to have kits!" Rainfur argued, although she was tired.

"Yes, that's what I mean." Dawnstar seemed tired.

"I know, I know I have to be deputy, I'll give up my kits and give it to Dapplefur, since she's expecting again as well." Rainfur finally meowed reluctantly.

"That's... if that's fine with you." Dawnstar hesitated.

"I guess it is. I'll do the best for my Clan." Rainfur nodded a little reluctantly.

"RainClan thanks your courage and loyalty, Rainfur." Dawnstar dipped her head at me. "I know you will serve your Clan well."

"I'll try, Dawnstar." Rainfur promised her leader.

"I know you will. Now you may leave." Dawnstar acknowledged her with a flick of her tail. Rainfur padded out of the den slowly, starting to run and find Brambleheart.

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"Brambleheart, I need to tell you something." Rainfur's voice was sad when she called.

"What is it?" He poked his head out, confused.

"I–I have to give up our kits and give it to Dapplefur. I–I must be the deputy." Rainfur was embarrassed. *He must think I'm ambitious.* Brambleheart's eyes narrowed, then softened.

"Okay, I know you must have a reason, you would never be that ambitious, I know you. I understand, I will take care of them with Dapplefur." He nodded.

"Thank you. I'll visit the nursery everyday if I can." Rainfur promised. *I just hope I have time to do that.*

Bramblefur nuzzled Rainfur affectionately, they purred, relishing the scents of each other.

"I'll tell Dapplefur." Rainfur meowed.

"Okay." Brambleheart looked at her, "be careful, I still need you until our kits are born!" He joked, and Rainfur purred in amusement.

"You bet!" She headed off in the direction of the nursery. Her mind still filled with thoughts, she climbed into a nest.

"Hi! I heard you're having kits too!" Dapplefur welcomed me the moment Rainfur came in.

"Oh yeah." Rainfur nodded.

"That's wonderful news! Are they Brambleheart's?" She asked.

"Yeah." Rainfur settled down, and Dapplefur looked pleased. "Oh and...I won't be caring for my kits, so will you take them for me?" Rainfur stumbled over the words.

"What?" Dapplefur's eyes narrowed in confusion.

"I have to be deputy. It's my destiny." Rainfur finally understood what her destiny was. To be a leader.

"Oh, in that case, of course I will! I hope you do well!" Dapplefur meowed cheerfully.

"Thanks." Rainfur murmured.

"Not a problem!"

Rainfur lay down, fatigue filling her. She sighed, feeling her chest's heaviness, she slept.

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"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ouch! Help me! It hurts!" Rainfur wailed in despair, looking around to find Brambleheart, but he was nowhere to be found. *Where is he when I'm like this!* Rainfur thought, cursing.

"Rainfur! I got you a stick!" Brambleheart ran in and thrust me the branch, and Rainfur looked at him gratefully.

She was about to say thank you, until, "Hurts." She whimpered.

"Take deep breaths." Amberfur advised, and Rainfur concentrated. *Deep breaths.* She kept repeating to herself.

"That's right! A kit is coming!" Amberfur's excited mew almost got Rainfur out of control, but she held it.

Rainfur didn't know how long it took, but it didn't feel long until Amberfur called, "A she-kit!" *Yes!* Rainfur praised herself.

Brambleheart immediately started licking the kit, and asked, "What should we name it?"

"Moonkit." Rainfur answered without question. It was the first thing that popped up in her mind. *So beautiful.*

Rainfur gazed at their kit happily, but a spasm came again, she quickly picked up the stick and bit hard, this time, it was fast.

"Another one! A tom!" Cloudheart announced.

"What should we name this one?" Rainfur stroked the kit's long fur.

"Sunkit." Brambleheart breathed, and Rainfur nodded in agreement. They purred happily and buried their muzzles into each other's.

"I love you, Rainfur." Brambleheart confessed.

"What do you think, mouse brain? Of course you love me! Or we wouldn't have these wonderful kits!" Rainfur joked, and Brambleheart purred. "I love you too." She then nuzzled Brambleheart affectionately.

"What did you name them?" Amberfur padded up to them.

"Moonkit and Sunkit." Rainfur answered quickly, licking the two's messy fur. *They're just perfect.* She thought.

"They're so cute!" Amberfur grinned, "may I?" She gestured to lick them, and Rainfur nodded.

"Of course."

Amberfur picked the kits carefully up, and started cleaning them up, as Rainfur watched, she felt more dedication to the Clan, more hope, more courage. *I will lead the Clan in the hardest days, and I will be the best deputy I can be.* I vowed a silent prayer to StarClan.

Chapter 24

"Dewpelt!" Leafshade cried in pain and sorrow. Rainfur peeked out of the medicine den, looking away from Moonkit and Sunkit.

"He's... dead." Fernshadow murmured in grief, her eyes darkening.

"No. No. Not this soon! Dewpelt!" Dawnstar rushed out of her den, and halted right in front of his dead body laying on the ground. A moment of silence passed. "What happened, how did this happen! StarClan, why! Why right now! RiverClan has attacked, now our deputy has died, what next!" She looked up at StarClan. No response, it felt empty for a few heartbeats. No one spoke.

I know why this happened. Rainfur sighed, *because of me. My destiny. It sacrificed Dewpelt, a good deputy. This is too early for me, I'm not ready yet. But I will be.* Rainfur closed her eyes, sending a silent prayer to StarClan. *Please, let me do well, because I don't think I can do this without some guidance.*

Through the mist of grief among the clan, Dawnstar

turned and fixed her gaze on Rainfur. Rainfur tried to hide, but her leader's gaze was always following her.

"We will sit vigil for Dewpelt now, till dawn. We'll be okay, StarClan will guide us. I already have a new deputy in mind. A true loyal warrior, special in its way." Rainfur grimaced, that was her. The true loyal warrior that was special. *I will do this, for my destiny.*

The clan exchanged looks of surprise, thinking about who it might be, while Rainfur knew it was her.

Brambleheart padded into the den, curled his tail beside Rainfur's and whispered into her ear. "That's you isn't it? The special one." Rainfur's ears twitched.

"Yes." She sighed, flicking her tail frantically.

"Why are you so worried? You can do this, I know you can, Rainfur. Trust yourself more." Brambleheart nuzzled Rainfur's flank.

"I suppose. I'm not experienced though, I don't know what it's like! I'm nervous." Rainfur confessed, dropping her head.

"You mouse-brain! Every deputy is nervous, no deputy has had experience! They all were nervous!" Brambleheart purred, while licking Moonkit.

"They're amazing." Seeing Brambleheart licking Moonkit, Rainfur started licking Sunkit.

"I know. They look so cute."

"I want to go outside!" Moonkit had just opened her eyes, and squeaked. Rainfur's fur bushed up, that scared her.

"Me too! Me too! Why is everyone so quiet!" Sunkit bounced on his feet, about to run out of the nursery until Rainfur's tail instinctively blocked the exit.

"Not yet, Moonkit, Sunkit! Our deputy has just left to join StarClan, and the whole clan is sitting vigil. Don't be troublesome kits and stay in the nursery!" Rainfur told them off in a soft way. *How could I leave them! They're so cute! No, I must, I will come back for you, little ones, until I become deputy, this cannot happen.*

"Why? Where is he?" Moonkit frowned.

"He... has joined StarClan. When cats pass away, they go to StarClan for shelter and food to live a good afterlife." Rainfur explained.

"Oh, okay." Moonkit sighed, and stopped talking.

The sun was slowly creeping up from the sky. Moonhigh has passed, and dawn is soon to come. Bright orange and yellow covered the deep, dark blue night sky. Even the Silverpelt was barely visible under this bright color.

Does that mean StarClan has left us? They can't. Maybe they're just disappointed in me, I hope that's the case. I'm thinking too far, StarClan

would never do that.

Rainfur's tail flicked frantically to and fro. Dewpelt has left to join StarClan, and now she has to take the job as the deputy of the clan. *I can't do this, I need Brambleheart. I will give up the kits for now, but I need Brambleheart. I can't do this without him!*

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"Rainfur!" Dawnstar padded up to her. "Follow me to my den. I must tell you something." Rainfur had just been eating fresh-kill, then dipped her head. *What could she possibly have to say?*

"Alright." Rainfur finished up the fresh-kill in a few bites, then they walked together away from the fresh-kill pile, both seeming to age every heartbeat. The trees around them rustled, the wind blew lush green leaves off of their tree branches. Nature seemed normal, but the clan was chaotic.

They settled down in her leaders' den, curling up their tails around them. "What do you want to tell me? Is it about being a deputy?" Rainfur finally asked, after moments of silence.

"No, it's something... I would not admit to everyone." Dawnstar paused. *What would be something she would never admit to everyone? And why would she tell me about it?*

"Why not?" Rainfur asked out of pure curiosity.

"You see these battle scars on me? I... lost a life because of them." Dawnstar's eyes glistened, then started to lick her battle wounds. They had stopped bleeding, but Rainfur could still tell that the extreme battle wounds were still not entirely cured. *What? That's too soon. I should've told her not to go to battle in the first place!* Her mouth gaped wide open.

"So soon?" Was all she could manage.

"I know. It was worth it though, we got the Stream back." Dawnstar tried to comfort herself.

"It wasn't worth it. You lost a life, you only have eight now."

Rainfur shook her head, murmuring.

"A loss is a loss. At least we won." Dawnstar sighed. "Now you know. I couldn't let the entire clan know, they would panic more than they already are."

"I know. I understand." Rainfur dipped her head solemnly.

"One more thing... I actually have already lost a life before, I..." Dawnstar licked her fur in embarrassment, "I... got trapped in a Twoleg trap."

Rainfur blinked in surprise, "That's quite dangerous, you should be careful next time! Those things could strip all your lives away if you weren't careful!"

"I know, I was quite lucky. Anyways, I should go announce you as my deputy now. Do you have Dapplefur and your kits all sorted?" Dawnstar asked, licking her paw while talking.

"Yes, I do." Rainfur sighed.

"I know it's hard for you. RainClan needs this kind of determination and loyalty." Dawnstar assured her. "Go back out now, you should get ready for the ceremony."

"I will. I will try to serve the Clan well." Rainfur promised, padding out of the den while saying so.

"Thank you." Dawnstar followed behind.

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"LET ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY GATHER BENEATH THE HIGHROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" Dawnstar's voice made Rainfur jump. *It's time, I hope I'm ready. I have to be.*

Brambleheart flicked his tail behind you, feeling the warmth of him on you, you relaxed, and slowly stepped out of the den. "Come on, you'll be just fine." Brambleheart assured.

"What if I'm not fine?" Rainfur sighed, padding up beneath the Highrock to then lick her paws.

"Don't think about it, and you'll do good. StarClan will be watching." Brambleheart purred.

"Exactly what he said! Be more confident, Rainfur! You're a great friend, and I'm sure that you will be a great deputy too!" Willowheart piped up behind her.

"I suppose so." Rainfur had to take the word for it. If Brambleheart and Willowheart couldn't reassure her, no one could.

"Today, we will announce the new deputy of RainClan!" Dawnstar continued, her gaze landed on Rainfur. She didn't meet her gaze, but she could feel it. "I've thought about this for the past few days, and I believe the new deputy should be Rainfur!" She finished, eyes shining. Rainfur sheepishly stood up and bowed her head at the leader. Her legs were shaking, but she forced herself to stay strong.

"Thank you, I never thought this would really happen." Rainfur stuttered, *I kind of did though. Because of the prophecy.* The following heartbeat passed in awkward silence. *What should I say?* She started panicking, then saw Brambleheart's soft, amber eyes on her, and continued. "Dewpelt was an amazing deputy, and I wish I could be half as good of a deputy as he is. I will do my very best to serve the clan well." Rainfur finished with a final bow.

"RAINFUR! RAINFUR! RAINFUR! RAINFUR!" The clan yowled in approval, raising their heads to Silverpelt. *I hope I can be a good deputy, and I will do my best, I promise.* Rainfur promised StarClan silently as she relished the sound of the clan's cheering for her.

Chapter 25

Five full moons have passed since the day Rainfur had become deputy, and Dawnstar was only brimley on her last four lives.

"Leafshade, Willowheart, Goldenfeather, Featherhawk, Nightfall, and Pearlpaw, go on hunting patrol please." Rainfur was organizing the patrols at dawn, turning from cat to cat. "And Yarrowlight, Escentmoon, Fernpaw, Sunshine, and Hollowfeather, go on dawn patrol."

The cats nodded, gathered together, and left. Rainfur watched them leave, feeling quite nostalgic. *It's been so long since I've been ordered to a patrol.*

"What are you thinking, something about our past?" Brambleheart padded toward her, his tail sweeping over her fur.

"Yeah. I feel... responsible for so many things." Rainfur sighed, sitting down.

"You must be tired, let's go share fresh-kill." Brambleheart suggested.

"Fine." She stood up again, and yawned, stretching her paws, then followed Brambleheart. "How is Moonkit and Sunkit doing with Dapplefur?" The thought suddenly popped up in her mind.

"They're doing great! Do you want to see them? They seem happier than ever in the nursery with Dapplefur's kits." Brambleheart purred in delight. *Even happier than they were with me?* Rainfur stiffened, then relaxed. *What are you thinking, mouse brain! Think about how happy they are! You should be happy and proud of them! Not jealous!*

"Sure." Rainfur agreed, and followed Brambleheart to the nursery. Lichen covered a small corner of the den, and four kits were playing there. Dapplefur's kits, who were around 5 moons old. Honeykit and

Reedkit, a tom and a she-cat, along with Rainfur's, around 5 moons old, Moonkit and Sunkit, also a tom and a she-cat. "Hello!" Rainfur purred as she finally saw her kits again.

"Rainfur! We missed you! We want you back! Dapplefur is nice, but I want you, you're my mother!" Moonkit's eyes rounded as she heard her mother's voice.

"Me too!" Sunkit turned around.

"Sorry my wonderful kits, but I have to stay being deputy, it's my destiny to, I will come back for you, I promise. You'll be an apprentice soon anyways." Rainfur's heart almost shattered into pieces as she said that sentence.

"You promise?" Moonkit pleaded.

"Yes." Rainfur's voice cracked. "I'll come back next time, have fun." Not being able to bear it anymore, she left the nursery, with Bramleheart following behind.

"It'll be okay, you'll be a great leader, and they'll understand." Brambleheart told you.

"I hope so." Rainfur sighed, and padded towards the fresh-kill pile. "Come on, share a squirrel with me." She called him.

"Coming!" Brambleheart padded towards her. Tails twined together, they shared the prey under the bright sun, shining with hope.

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"RIVERCLAN, ATTACK!" Riverflow's voice pierced through the camp. The sun was already setting. *Couldn't they have planned a different time?* Rainfur grumbled in frustration. *Put RainClan's safety first though. Stop complaining, Rainfur! You're the deputy now! Make a good role model!*

"Not again!" Willowheart mumbled.

"I really wish this was over." Rainfur groaned.

"RAINCLAN, ATTACK!" Rainfur yowled, and the clan charged on.

"Come, fight Riverflow with me." Willowheart urged, eyes shining, and of course, Rainfur couldn't resist.

"Of course."

They crept up behind Riverflow in their battle stances, and prepared to pounce. At the right moment, they launched themselves upwards, digging her claws into Riverflow's back, as Willowheart nippled at his belly.

"OW! WHERE DID YOU COME FROM!" Riverflow screeched in pain as he realised there were two attackers on him.

"Remember me?" Rainfur hissed into his face, and scratched his eye.

"Of course I do." Riverflow scowled, and flung her off his back. Rainfur landed with a thump. "Ha! Not much of a deputy are-" His eyes glimmered with triumph, but before he could attack, Willowheart bit hard on his hind leg. "OUCH! AHHHH!" Riverflow screamed in surprise.

"That's what I thought. Stay away from Rainfur!" Willowheart grunted. Rainfur felt the warmth of her best friend crawl through her fur, and silently purred.

While she was caught up in her thoughts, Riverflow lunged upwards, and dug his claws in her shoulder. Rainfur couldn't move. Riverflow snarled, and bit into her hind leg, then pushed her to the ground. Rainfur shrieked in pain, looking for Willowheart.

Willowheart was fending off another warrior that was trying to help Riverflow. *I guess I'm going to die. Just like this.* Rainfur's eyes watered.

"I won't kill you. As I don't need to kill you to win. We already won the Stream." Riverflow spoke calmly, like he always did in gatherings. Riverflow and Rainfur were quite alike in some ways, and friends in some ways. *That's just hideous. The Stream is OURS.* Without wasting a breath, Rainfur charged up again, with fury that he already claimed the Stream to be theirs.

"The Stream will NEVER be RiverClans!!!!" Rainfur hissed, and grabbed him by the neck like what queens did to carry their kits. Even though Riverflow was really heavy, Rainfur was so angry that she didn't feel the most of it. Riverflow's eyes widened, and without warning, got flung into the nearby lake.

Coughing, Riverflow swam out of the lake, his eyes glimmered with menace as he stalked back to Rainfur. *Oh StarClan. Now he hates me more.*

"The Stream will be ours." Riverflow's eyes glittered in the setting sun, making his eyes glow orange. "But not today." He sighed. "I will get you back. Just you wait!"

Rainfur purred, she knew he was an enemy, but he was a good friend sometimes too. "That won't happen, but sure."

"RIVERCLAN, RETREAT!" Riverflow casted one last glance at you, and left with his clan.

"Willowheart? Are you okay?" Rainfur remembered her friend that was fending off the huge tom.

"Yeah, I'm fine." Willowheart nodded, and Rainfur was relieved to see it was true. "How was your-" Her eyes widened as she looked up to see Rainfur. "Oh StarClan! Let's get you to Amberfur and Cloudheart."

"Is it that bad?" Rainfur stared at her friend.

"Does it not hurt?" Willowheart stared back.

"Not really?" Rainfur started questioning herself.

"Are we starting a staring contest now?" Willowheart didn't blink.

"No. No. We're not here to fool around. Let's go get our injuries healed." Rainfur blinked out of it.

"You're right." Willowheart sighed, and they both padded back to camp.

Chapter 26

"Will she be okay?" Rainfur's eyes glittered with worry as she looked at her leader, Dawnstar. She had fought hard in the battle, but got many bad injuries. *I hope she recovers, otherwise I'll be one step closer to being a leader... and I'm not ready for that yet.*

"I'm not sure. She seems to have an infection on her hind leg. It's soon to be greenleaf, and greencough will be coming. It may affect her too, I'm afraid." Cloudheart's mew was taut. Amberfur didn't speak, just stared at Dawnstar with concern in her eyes.

"Will she recover, though?" Rainfur repeated.

"It will depend if she gets another sickness or not." Cloudheart's gaze wavered.

"Okay. I know you're trying your best." Rainfur sighed, looking at her sleeping leader. She had a lot of new scars on her face, and cobwebs seemed to be everywhere. *I just hope she doesn't get greencough. It can be quite dangerous. Especially for Dawnstar.*

"We always do." Cloudheart replied without hesitation. "But sometimes, our attempt isn't good enough to save the cat." She mewed solemnly. *Is she hinting that they're attempt to save Dawnstar isn't going to be enough?* Rainfur stared at Cloudheart, then shook her head in disbelief. *No, I mustn't be pessimistic.*

"I understand." Rainfur dipped her head respectfully. "Please tell me when she wakes up. I would like to see her."

"We will." Amberfur spoke.

"Thank you." Rainfur murmured, and left the den.

"How was Dawnstar?" Featherhawk asked.

"Not great." Rainfur sighed.

"Oh. That's not good. What happened?" Featherhawk frowned.

"She had so many scars everywhere! Cobwebs were just covering her injuries barely. Dry blood was all over her." Rainfur told her, shaking her head.

"Oh StarClan. I hope she's okay." Featherhawk's eyes widened.

"Me too." Rainfur raised her muzzle up to the sky, hoping StarClan would hear their prayer. *Please, StarClan, save Dawnstar.* She perked her ears for an answer. None came. Sighing, Rainfur lowered her head.

"Well, let's not think about sad stuff, let's go share some prey!" Featherhawk tried to be enthusiastic, but through her eyes Rainfur could tell she was as worried as Rainfur was.

"I suppose." Rainfur followed her sister to the fresh-kill pile. *Perhaps some fresh-kill will make me feel better.* She didn't think so.

"Squirrel?" Featherhawk asked.

"Sure." Rainfur didn't feel in the mood to speak too much. She bit half-heartedly into the prey. It tasted like nothing. Bland and boring. Featherhawk seemed to be enjoying it though. *How can I enjoy prey when I have things to worry about?* Rainfur sighed.

"Are you not going to eat that?" Featherhawk stared at the morsel of prey left in front of Rainfur.

"You can take it. I'm not hungry." Rainfur nodded.

"Okay, whatever you like." Featherhawk gulped down the prey immediately and cleaned her paws.

Rainfur stared at the clearing with all her clanmates. This was going to be *her* Clan soon.

******

"Rainfur?" Cloudheart walked up behind Rainfur solemnly.

"What happened?" She spun around to face the medicine cat.

"I'm afraid Dawnstar is getting weaker and weaker. She told me to call you." Cloudheart told her. *No. She can't be.* Rainfur stared at Cloudheart.

"I'll go see her." Rainfur started walking to the medicine cat den. As soon as she got close, she heard Dawnstar groaning.

"Dawnstar! It's me, Rainfur. Cloudheart sent me!" Rainfur stepped inside the medicine cat den and called softly.

"Rainfur! Good. You're here." Dawnstar purred, but she was rasping instead of talking with her usual bright voice.

"Why did you call me to come?" Rainfur asked, concerned as Dawnstar started to cough.

"Rainfur... I'm afraid that the infection may be getting worse, and it may start stripping away my last four lives." Dawnstar rasped, looking into Rainfur's eyes seriously.

"No. I refuse to believe that. Amberfur. Cloudheart! You have to do something! She can't die yet! Not yet!" Rainfur started to panic, they must be able to do something. *I'm not ready yet! I'm not ready!* She started to back away.

"We've tried all we can, but it's getting worse and worse every day. She seems to be catching greencough too. A weak cat like her can catch a lot of sicknesses when we're not careful." Amberfur shook her head sadly.

"Try. Please. I can't become a leader yet! I'm not ready!" Rainfur stared at Amberfur in disbelief.

"That's what every deputy says when they become leader." Dawnstar purred. "You'll do fine. I'll try to heal, but I'm afraid it might be it as soon as I catch greencough." She paused, her eyes filled with worry as she gazed at Rainfur. "You'll do better than me. I can feel it."

"I'll try." Rainfur sighed, "rest well." She told Dawnstar softly, and

left the den. *Please. Don't catch greencough. StarClan, you must help!*

"I'm afraid we cannot. This is your destiny, and you will have to bear the pain of losing your leader. We will guide you, but you must face this alone. StarClan cannot change a cat's destiny, but we can guide them to the right path." A voice rang into Rainfur's ear. *Who is it?*

"Who are you?" Rainfur echoed her thoughts.

"I am Rain Fall. You know me as Rainstar. You will be the next Rainstar, and I am glad to hear that." Rain Fall purred.

"Rain Fall? Oh! I've heard many stories from you! Are you the cat that started RainClan at first?" Rainfur asked in surprise. *I'm meeting the first ever leader of RainClan!*

"Yes. I am, indeed. My Clan has formed well. It has been an honor to be the first leader of this Clan." Rain Fall nodded.

"A pleasure to meet you!" Rainfur purred.

"You too. I will guide your paws. You will become a great leader. Dawnstar will soon die, and you will become the new leader." Rain Fall assured Rainfur.

"Thank you. I am not afraid anymore. I will try my best to serve my Clan the best possible." Rainfur purred.

"Very well. Then I will see you soon. May StarClan light your path." Rain Fall purred, and mewed farewell. Rainfur found it quite honorable that she had just met RainClan's first ever leader, but also quite weird. She no longer felt afraid. New energy poured into her muscles, and she felt strong and new again, no longer worried about things that were to come. *I will serve this Clan the best I can with my very last drop of blood.* She vowed silently.

Chapter 27

"Dawnstar! Dawnstar!" Rainfur rushed to the medicine cat den as soon as she heard Dawnstar coughing.

"Rainfur." Dawnstar's voice filled with pain. "I think I got greencough."

"No. No. NO!" Rainfur cried in vain.

"We couldn't avoid it." Cloudheart sighed. "We tried. But she still caught greencough. It's already really common in greenleaf."

"We're so sorry." Amberfur agreed solemnly.

"I understand. I just hope she can still recover." Rainfur stared at Dawnstar. *I know it's probably impossible now. She looks weaker than ever.*

"It's a very small chance." Cloudheart shook her head.

"I know that too." Dawnstar sighed. "But Rainfur, I heard you've been doing great controlling the Clan without me."

"I was only doing my job." Rainfur blushed as her leader praised her.

"Of course you were." Dawnstar purred, but got stopped by another convulsion.

"Dawnstar!" Rainfur pressed her muzzle beside hers. She felt the heat on Dawnstar, and she started to cough again. *Please don't die on me.*

"This happens to her every now and then. We can't do anything about it. We can try some more catmint." Amberfur looked at Cloudheart hopefully.

"No, it's no use. Don't waste your herbs on me. I'm ready to join

StarClan soon. I feel them calling to me." Dawnstar looked up at her and rasped.

"Are you sure?" Cloudheart hesitated.

"Yes." Dawnstar replied without thinking for a heartbeat.

"If that's what you want." Cloudheart dipped her head respectfully. *We can't do anything for her except watch her suffer. This feels so... wrong.* Rainfur couldn't bear to watch anymore, and turned away.

"Dawnstar, would you like some prey?"

"Bring her some water as well." Amberfur added.

"Okay, I'll be right back." Rainfur was relieved to leave the den, it smelled so much better outside instead of the smell of sickness and infection. *Smells like mouse-bile, even.* Wrinkling her nose, she quickly picked a plump vole from the fresh-kill pile and went to gather some moss and water. She came back to the medicine den and dropped the moss with water and prey. "Here."

"Thanks." Dawnstar grunted, and sat up to lap at the moss. Rainfur looked at her with concern as she lay down with a thump, breathing heavily.

Suddenly, she stopped breathing, with a gasp of horror, Rainfur yowled. "Dawnstar!" *She's losing a life. Just like this.* Rainfur stared at the medicine cats. "Can't you do anything?" She growled.

"No. There's nothing we can do now. StarClan is taking her." Amberfur shook her head sadly.

Dawnstar blinked and spluttered blood everywhere. "Rainfur. I think it is finally time." She coughed. "To become the leader of RainClan." Her eyes locked with Rainfur's.

"No. Not yet." Rainfur whispered.

"It must be this way. Be brave, Rainfur." Dawnstar

sighed, shuddered, and stopped breathing.

"NO!" Rainfur howled as Dawnstar never opened her eyes again. *She's dead. She's dead! And now... I can finally finish my destiny.* Her tail drooped.

"Rainfur? What happened?" Willowheart ran to Rainfur as she heard her yowl. Then, she saw Dawnstar, lying on the ground. Dead. "She's dead?" She whispered.

Rainfur nodded. "My turn now." Sighing, she left the den. Her clanmates surrounded her, assuring her that she will be a fine leader.

"Dawnstar's dead." She whispered over and over again. "We'll bury her later." She told Featherhawk bluntly.

"Of course we will." Featherhawk sighed, her gaze mournful.

"Come on, Rainfur. We should go soon." Cloudheart murmured to Rainfur gently.

"Go?" Rainfur echoed. "Where?"

"The Moonpool." Cloudheart told her.

"Oh." Rainfur's heart dropped. *My nine lives and the 'star' in my name.* "Okay. Now?" She turned back and stared at the clearing, all her clanmates stared at her in respect. *They already treat me like a leader. But I'm not ready yet. I will be, after this trip.*

"Let's go then, we ought to be back before moonhigh for sitting vigil and announcing your new deputy." Cloudheart looked up at the moon.

"I'm coming." Rainfur sighed, and followed Cloudheart into the valley.

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"We're here!" Cloudheart announced. They stood in front of a pool of shining water. *It's... beautiful.* Rainfur stared at it in awe.

"What do I do?" Shaking her thoughts away, Rainfur asked

Cloudheart.

"Lay down comfortably and touch your nose on the water surface. You should be taken to StarClan. See you there." Cloudheart's eyes glimmered. Rainfur did what she said.

Laying down on a smooth rock, Rainfur gently dipped her nose into the pool. It felt... tingly, and cold. She closed her eyes, and waited.

"Greetings, Rainfur!" Frostar's voice made Rainfur open her eyes. Rainfur gasped in surprise, and warmth filled up in her.

"Frostar!" She purred with delight. *It's been so long!*

Chapter 28

"Are you ready?" Froststar locked her gaze with Rainfur's.

"Yes." Rainfur breathed. She wanted to take a step towards her former mentor, but she was stuck in place. Cloudheart was beside her with an encouraging look. *I'm ready now.*

"Good. Let's begin." Froststar flicked her tail. *How does this work? If only Froststar is here... what about my other eight lives?* Rainfur looked around the sunny meadow nervously.

As if an order, eight more starry cats surrounded Rainfur in a heartbeat. Froststar looked at Rainfur warmly.

"For this life, I give you determination. Use it well as you may face many challenges. Always keep going, never give up." Froststar stepped forward to touch her nose to Rainfur's. A spark of energy went through her, it felt warm, yet strong. Her thoughts filled with the determined feel that glowed from the sun, shining so brightly Rainfur felt almost pain. Blinking, she met the next cat.

"Dawnstar!" Her former leader looked so much more young, just like when she was a deputy. She no longer looked sick, her pelt was no longer ruffled and messy. She stood up straight with pride, and looked at Rainfur.

"With this life I give you hope. Even in the darkest moments, think about the future. Always know there is hope. Even the dimmest hope can save the Clan. Use it wisely." Dawnstar touched her nose against Rainfur's.

Her eyes shut as wind blew in her ears, she could feel the blood shed in battle stop, and the Clans uniting together to fight something that felt impossible. The cold wind suddenly turned warm, bright and sunny, basking Rainfur's pelt. She opened her eyes again, and found herself standing back in the sunny meadow of

StarClan.

"Thank you." She breathed.

"Greetings, Rainfur. We meet again." A pale gray blue she-cat stood forward, her pelt almost the same as hers. Except her eyes were shining blue. The voice was weirdly familiar.

"Rain Fall?" Rainfur questioned inquiringly.

"Yes." She purred. "This life will be a tough one. With this life, I give you love. Love that you will only feel from your most trusted cats. Love so deeply that it can revive yourself from battles. Remember love when you feel like failing, it will help you a lot." Rain Fall spoke with a warm voice. Rainfur braced herself this time as pain rushed through her body. The feeling of a nursing queen's love towards their kits. The painful feeling of Rainfur giving up her kits for her destiny to become leader. Blood roared in her ears and she tried to stay conscious. Crumbling to her paws, she opened her eyes, gasping.

"I will remember." She breathed heavily. *Forever.* She added to herself silently.

Rain Fall's eyes glittered, and she meowed. "Good. We will meet again soon." The next starry cat Rainfur could not recognize. It was a tom this time.

"Who are you?" She asked, tilting her head sideways.

"Hello Rainfur. I am Flameheart, one of the medicine cats of RainClan before." Flameheart dipped his head.

"A pleasure to meet you!" Rainfur exclaimed.

"With this life, I give you healing. Listen to your medicine cats during the hardest days. Tell them your thoughts and worries. Be open with them, tell them your secrets. They will help you with omens, prophecies, and more. Use it well." His voice was strong as he spoke. As soon as his nose touched Rainfur's she felt the pain of an injured warrior from battle. The scars that are being healed, to new life. Yowling in pain, Rainfur transitioned to another feeling of

understanding, then the relief of having a problem solved. Her heart soothed as her eyes blinked open once again.

"Thank you." She murmured. His eyes glimmered, shining as brightly as the stars surrounding him, with a flick of a tail, he left.

"Hello. I am Clear Sky, or Skystar. The first leader of SkyClan." A light gray tom with blue eyes spoke.

"Oh, wow. Glad to meet you." Rainfur looked at him in awe. Even SkyClan has come to join in to give her her life as well. *I'm so honored.* Rainfur purred.

"With this life, I give you leadership. Use it well to choose a wise deputy. You will face many many challenges, some are tougher than others. Either way. Use this life to lead your Clan the best it can." Clear Sky's voice rang into Rainfur's ears; she couldn't avoid a word of it. The faces of RainClan's former leaders flashed in front of Rainfur's eyes. Then strength and confidence poured into her. The challenges and pain struck her and she crumbled to the ground. Her head ached as she thought about the future, as the Clan fought one another. The thought of keeping the Clan together wasn't that easy. Rainfur heaved a deep breath and found herself sitting on the grass in StarClan again.

Rainfur nodded in thanks, still breathing heavily from the memory. The next cat came.

"Hello. I am Moth Flight. The first medicine cat of the Clans." Moth Flight looked at Rainfur in the eyes. Before she could talk, Moth Flight spoke. "With this life, I give you wisdom. Always think first, then act. Use it wisely to your advantage for the Clan. Think multiple times for your choices. Beware. There is much more to come." Her voice had a bit of warning inside, but Rainfur had already felt the pain of wisdom she had to sacrifice in the future. The things she would have to do for the Clan, the wisdom that would come from it. She blinked a couple times, and found herself back. *I can handle this.* She told herself multiple times. *Only 3 more to go.*

"Hello! I am Waterstar. Deputy for Rain Fall." The tom's eyes shone

as he looked back at Rain Fall, amused.

"Greetings!" Rainfur purred.

"With this life, I give you forgiveness. Sometimes, you must forgive what you think is wrong, but it will lead you in the right direction. Learn to forgive others, as they may help your Clan in the future." Waterstar spoke, and touched his nose to hers. Pain surged through Rainfur as she felt the feeling of cats that wanted to join the Clans but got rejected. The feeling of annoyance and anger as others didn't forgive you. The pain of being imprisoned because others didn't trust you. Rainfur gasped, darkness engulfed her, she was blinded. Blinking her eyes rapidly, she was back in StarClan, coughing. *I can't do this... but I must. 2 more lives left.* Rainfur sighed.

The next cat stepped forward, eyes full of sympathy. "Greetings. I am Yellowfang. I'm sure you know me from many myths."

"I do! I'm happy to meet you!" Rainfur purred.

"Well, not when you feel the pain in this life." Yellowfang grunted. "With this life, I give you bravery. During battles, use this life to sacrifice yourself for a cat you find important. Be brave. You have nine lives to spare. But other cats only have one." Yellowfang touched her nose gingerly to Rainfur's. This life was the worst one out of all of them. Although Rainfur braced for it, the pain that shot into her made her yelp. She felt like she was sinking in the water, the world closing up around her. It felt like she had infinite scars. Screeching in pain, she opened her eyes with a gasp. *That's done. One left. One left.* She repeated to herself.

"Thank you." She grunted.

"No need to thank me. I'm sure you felt that horrible pain." Yellowfang purred.

"Ashtail!" Rainfur exclaimed as she saw the former medicine cat. He had been killed by a badger while gathering herbs alone, and since he wasn't a warrior, h e couldn't defend himself.

"Welcome. This life will be calm, it won't hurt." Ashtail's eyes

glimmered with amusement. *Good.* Rainfur purred. "With this life I give you friendship. Not all Clans can be rivals. Working together can let you achieve more. Use this life wisely." Rainfur nodded, and this time, unlike most of the lives she had received, was warm and soothing. The feeling of having a friend beside you, and the warmth of another cat helping you made Rainfur confident. *I can lead this Clan well!* She opened her eyes, relishing every bit of that moment.

"Thank you for the last life." She purred. Ashtail flicked his tail dismissively, and joined the other StarClan cats that were still around Rainfur. She looked around again. Froststar, Dawnstar, Rain Fall, Flameheart, Clear Sky, Moth Flight, Waterstar, Yellowfang, Ashtail. *Thank you for all the lives. I promise to serve my Clan to the best of my ability.*

Chapter 29

"Rainstar! Rainstar! Rainstar! Rainstar!" The StarClan cats cheered for her, giving Rainfur her new name. *Rainstar. I am a true leader now.* She stood up straight, and relished the moment. *I will always remember this moment.* She purred.

"Thank you. We shall meet again. For now, I should return back to my Clan." Rainstar dipped her head to all the StarClan cats around her.

"Yes, we will meet again." Rain Fall's eyes glimmered. "Farewell, until the next time we meet."

Rainstar found herself laying beside Cloudheart next to the Moonpool again. "That was... amazing." She purred.

"Let's return. RainClan will be waiting for us now." Cloudheart dipped her head to Rainstar. *She's treating me like a leader now too.* She realised.

******

"Rainstar! Rainstar!" The Clan cheered as Rainstar and Cloudheart returned into the territory of RainClan.

"Rainstar." Willowheart and Featherhawk purred, and dipped their heads to Rainstar.

Rainstar purred. "So serious now aren't you!" Willowheart purred too. Featherhawk's eyes glittered with amusement.

"You'd better choose the deputy, the Clan is waiting." Featherhawk told Rainstar. *Of course!* "And Dawnstar's vigil."

"Of course!" Rainstar almost forgot. "LET ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY GATHER BENEATH THE HIGHROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" Rainstar jumped onto the Hightrock. It felt so weird saying the sentence, she was too used to another cat saying

it.

Her Clan gathered around the rock, their eyes locked onto Rainstar's. Feeling confident now, Rainstar continued. "I'm sure we are all mourning for Dawnstar's death, I am too. But we must continue on, with a new deputy!" Rainstar paused. *I've been thinking about this for a while... and who I think would be best... is Willowheart.* She saw Brambleheart, Willowheart, Featherhawk, Amberfur, all the cats she loved and knew staring at her eagerly. "I say these words before StarClan, so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of RainClan will be Willowheart!" Rainstar's voice echoed in the camp.

She saw her best friend's eyes light up. "Thank you. I will be pleased to be the new deputy of RainClan!"

"Willowheart! Willowheart! Willowheart! Willowheart!" The Clan cheered. None of them protested. *This day is going perfectly.* Rainstar purred. "We are not done yet! Now it is time to bury Dawnstar and finally sit vigil for her. Let's begin." She ended, and jumped down the Highrock.

******

"She was a great leader for all of us. She led the Clan well during our darkest times. I wish she is well in StarClan." Shadeclaw murmured. *She is well in StarClan.* Rainstar purred. The last time she had met Dawnstar, she had been young and beautiful like before.

"She had a great sense of responsibility and knew when to take action with battles or gatherings. She spoke well for all of RainClan." Flowerpetal sighed. Rainstar had heard stories that Flowerpetal was not actually from RainClan. She was from ShadowClan. *I wonder if that's true.*

"She was a great leader who sacrificed herself in battles. She saved me once from a RiverClan warrior, and I really appreciate her for that." Petalfall meowed solemnly.

It was finally Rainstar's turn. "She was an amazing leader to me, when I was tired, she would comfort me and praise me on how well

I was doing. During leafbare, she went to hunt out alone with her own risk of losing a life to bring more prey to RainClan. She was a great leader." Rainstar finished. Moonkit and Sunkit, who was about to be apprenticed, now looked at Rainstar with their cute wide eyes. *My kits. I've missed you!*

******

The sun slowly came up as Rainstar and the rest of the Clan still sat vigil. "It's time. The vigil is done." Rainstar announced as it turned to dawn. "Everyone get some sleep, and our new day will begin soon." Purring, Rainstar looked at her kits. "You too."

"Can we sleep with you now?" They asked.

"Until you become an apprentice." Rainstar purred, and led them to the leader's den. They quickly fell asleep with Rainstar's warmth, and she stood outside of the den, looking at the view of her Clan. Her muzzle raised up high, she vowed to StarClan. *No matter what happens, I will try not to let anything bad happen to this Clan and lead them through the toughest, darkest, nights.*

Epilogue

Flowerpetal's Farewell

Chapter 1

Flowerpetal looked back at the ShadowClan camp. *The Clan that I was born in... The Clan that I lived in.. The Clan that left me alone and taught me what darkness is...*

"Farewell, ShadowClan." She whispered, and cast one last glance to the camp with a mixture of emotion and went into the forest.

******

Flowerpetal swiftly hid into a bush when she was travelling through ThunderClan.

"Did you hear a weird noise?" A golden tabby asked.

The other cat, which has brown spots all over her, sniffed the air and mewed. "I don't smell anything, but the taste of forest."

Ha! Stupid ThunderClan cats, I had already rolled myself into a pool of mud. Now I just need these furballs to leave.

"Hmm..." the smallest one among them, who looked like an apprentice mewed. "Maybe the intruder did some disguise? Like rolling themselves in mud before coming?"

Ahem... Maybe they aren't that stupid. But one thing that will never change is their ability to annoy cats. Is it that hard to think that I am a bird or a skunk? And they chat about stuff which sounds like nonsense. Why can't they leave and catch some prey instead? That will save them so much time! No wonder they're so skinny!

She scowled inside her, but she still waited patiently for them to leave.

"Let's not waste time discussing this, we need to hunt!" The golden tabby meowed.

Finally someone who's smart! Flowerpetal scoffed.

"You are the one who started this!" The brown spotted she-cat glared at him.

The golden tom licked his chest fur embarrassedly and left the place where Flowerpetal was hiding. The other cats followed him and the forest was silent again.

Good thing ShadowClan's territory and RainClan's territory are near... I just need to pass a tiny part of ThunderClan territory to get to RainClan.

Flowerpetal scurried to the next bush that was beside her, she was slowly getting closer to RainClan, *what would I do to make RainClan trust me? Or make Froststar let me stay?*

Flowerpetal shook the thought away, *I just need to concentrate right now, think about it later.* Scrambling up a tree, she searched for the RainClan camp. *There!* She spotted a small fern tunnel that led to the RainClan camp, and looked around for cats that might be patrolling. *No cat in sight. I'll just go quickly.* She decided to take a run for it.

The fern tunnel was only a few steps away, but Flowerpetal stopped. *What will I do? RainClan will think I'm an intruder! I have to act normal and say I come in peace. RainClan is quite hard to get trust from.* She took a deep breath, and headed in, hoping a nicer cat would find her first, like maybe Cloudheart, their medicine cat.

"I smell ShadowClan." A cat hissed. Flowerpetal stiffened, they were definitely smarter than ThunderClan, at least in scenting. *I'll just go myself so they don't think I'm hiding.*

"It's me, Flowerpetal! I come in peace, I don't want to fight or anything." She stammered, and stepped out.

"Flowerpetal." Firefeather growled. "Why are you here?" She asked coldy. Flowerpetal started to get panic-risen as more and more RainClan cats surrounded her, some with curiosity, and some with

hatred.

"What's going on?" Even Froststar had to come out of her den. *What do I do now? Do I just tell them? I guess it's the only choice.* Flowerpetal sighed.

"I come in peace," She repeated. "I only want a new place to stay." She blinked hopefully at Froststar, who was flicking her tail to and fro.

"Why? I thought you were ShadowClan." Firefeather looked less hostile, yet her fur still bristled.

"I got tired of ShadowClan, they always made fun of me and bullied me. No one liked me. They treated me like a loner. Just because we never knew who my father was." Flowerpetal suddenly thought about her childhood.

"Flowerkit? Who's your father?" Pinekit asked Flowerkit, eyes blinking.

"I don't know! But he must have been a good warrior!" Flowerkit snapped back, she always got told by her denmates that her father was a loner.

"Ha! I don't think so! Your mother died and your father is a loner!" Russetkit sneered. Why do they always have to bully me? *Flowerkit sniffed.* I didn't do anything wrong! StarClan, why did you have to do this to me? I'm getting tired of my denmates.

"Stop! Russetkit, Pinekit, that's not nice! Her mother Silvernose was a brave warrior, who died saving her Clan. You shouldn't talk to your clanmate like that." Their mother, Birdwing, scolded.

Flowerkit puffed out her chest. "See? My mother was very brave!"

"What about your father?" Russetkit questioned.

"Russetkit!" Birdwing warned.

"Sorry." Russekit grumbled.

"Flowerpetal?" Froststar stared at her.

"What? Sorry, I didn't hear." Flowerpetal blinked her eyes a few times. *I didn't hear anything! What did she say?*

"We said that we felt bad for you, but you have to prove to us you're not a spy from ShadowClan." Froststar repeated, her face showing no emotions.

Flowerpetal's fur bristled for a bit. *I just came here for shelter, and I had to sneak here. Now I still need to prove myself?* "Oh." She managed. *I'll do all it takes, I guess.* "I'll prove myself. What do I need to do?"

Firefeather flicked her tail at Flowerpetal. "Follow me."

Firefeather had brought her to the medicine cat den. "First, you need to help Cloudheart till moonhigh." That's *not bad.* Flowerpetal blinked.

"That's it?" She asked, surprised.

"No, no no. There's one more thing, but for now, do this." Firefeather shook her head. "I'll leave you two to it, and I'll see you at moonhigh.

"Okay." Flowerpetal turned to Cloudheart. *This isn't too bad, I'd like to help a medicine cat!* "What do I need to do?"

"Do you know what yarrow leaves look like?" Cloudheart asked.

"Yes! I do, actually. I've helped Jayfrost before." Flowerpetal remembered she used to help Jayfrost, ShadowClan's medicine cat, when she was lonely. He would always come up with something. A pang struck her heart. She missed Jayfrost. He was her only friend. *It's fine, I'll see him anyway, he's a medicine cat, no rivals.*

"Good! Can you please fetch me some? Around 7 is good." Cloudheart purred.

"Okay!" Flowerpetal gladly accepted the job. She went on the search right away.

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"I'm back, and I found 11 yarrow leaves!" Flowerpetal mumbled excitedly through the yarrow leaves that were held between her jaws.

"Thank you so much! That's actually a lot." Cloudheart blinked at her, surprised, and purred.

"I would never let a medicine cat down" Flowerpetal purred, she was getting used to RainClan a bit more. Even her fur has RainClan stench on it now.

"That's good to know, always." Cloudheart smiled.

"Is it moonhigh now?" Flowerpetal asked. As happy as she was helping Cloudheart, her legs were sore after that herb searching session.

"About time, yes." Cloudheart peeked out the den and nodded.

"I'll go find Firefeather then." Flowerpetal told her.

"I hope you do stay in RainClan. You helped a lot today, and I'm grateful for it." Cloudheart dipped her head slightly. *Really? That's great.* Flowerpetal blinked, mewed her thanks, and left.

"Firefeather?" She called inside the warriors den.

"I'm here. Is that Flowerpetal?" A weary voice came from inside.

"Yes!"

"Okay, I'm coming." Firefeather padded out of the den. "So, how was it?"

"Cloudheart thinks I'm helpful!" Flowerpetal couldn't help but blurt out, purring.

"That's great! I'm glad! The next thing you need to do tomorrow is clean the bedding in the nursery. That's the last thing you need to do to prove yourself." Firefeather told Flowerpetal.

"Okay. Where do I sleep though?" She nodded. *I don't think they'll let*

me sleep in the warriors den until I've proven myself.

"Hmmm. Good question. I'll ask Froststar. Wait here." Firefeather scurried to the leader's den. Flowerpetal sighed, but waited patiently.

A few moments later, Firefeather came back. "Froststar said you could sleep in the prisoners' den for now. It's just a temporary den, so don't think too much about it." She told Flowerpetal.

"The prisoners' den?" She echoed.

"As I said, don't think too much about it." Firefeather rolled her eyes.

"But I'm not a prisoner. Am I?" Flowerpetal sighed.

"No, but we're not sure about you yet. Now just don't think about it and we'll be fine." Firefeather repeated.

"Okay." Flowerpetal muttered, and stepped in the prisoners' den. *I don't like it. It feels like I did something wrong when I didn't.*

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